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ALSO *Gordon C. Zahn, John Simon, Wilfrid Sheed, Garry Wills, Peter Steinfels, Leonard Kriegel, Gerald Weales, Martin E. Marty*

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NEWS & VIEWS

Saving the Oceans

The Council on Environmental Quality has recommended a national policy to limit the dumping of waste into the oceans, and President Nixon has passed the recommendations along to Congress, together with a promise that implementing legislation would follow in the next Congressional session. Very welcome news.

This is no red-herring issue, nor is it an issue that has been materially corrected since the furor of last summer over the burial of several hundred tons of nerve gas off the Florida coast and the dumping of several tons of surplus TNT off the Maryland coast. The abuse goes on.

The National Wildlife Federation, one of the nation's most prominent conservation organizations, is publicizing the fact that upwards of 48 million tons of damaging waste are belched into the sea from the U.S. each year: sulfuric acid, arsenic, napthenates, cyanides, mercury and heavy metals, pesticides, refuse from municipal sewage, plastics and cannery scrap, radioactive materials, chemical warfare agents, construction and demolition debris, and various rejected or contaminated products, from foodstuffs to appliances.

We're seeing perhaps the most wanton destruction of nature since the rape of the American West a century ago.

The U.S., of course, is not the only polluter of the oceans. It goes on all over the globe, though invariably to lesser extent elsewhere than along U.S. shores.

This is a detail which points up the urgency not merely for national controls, but for strong international regulations. The U.N. must take the lead here, but to be effective it must come alive and evidence leadership totally lacking of late on any and all matters.

Lost Horizons

Father Francis X. Murphy hit the nail on the head in his *New York Times* piece discussing the meeting of the Pope and the President:

"There is no evidence that the Vatican urged Mr. Nixon to attend the [Nasser] funeral in Cairo, both as a function of his behavior as a Christian, and as an excellent opportunity to preach peace on a level where it could affect both the leaders and the common people who need it most.

"Instead of announcing that the Papal Secretary of State was going, and that he would be happy to accompany both Mr. Nixon and President Tito to the funeral, the Holy See allowed the prudence of normal diplomacy to prevail . . . The opportunity to have a family gathering with the Russian heads of state, and, impossibly perhaps, even an Israeli delegate, was missed.

"To the seasoned diplomat, particularly the Vatican variety, such a suggestion will smack of unrealistic imprudence. Actually it is the imaginative Christian type of reaction that one might expect of a Pope or great religious figure anxious to lead the world out of its present impasse . . .

"The Egyptian leader's death occasioned the cancellation of Mr. Nixon's demonstration of armed might in the Mediterranean. It does not seem to have inspired an equal display of religious sensibility on the part of the Holy See."

The Protestant Ethic

Robert N. McMurry, a Chicago personnel consultant with a Ph.D in psychology and a prolific pen, tells how the Protestant ethic should work ideally at the office when an employee's "old values" begin to sit.

The man's peers should quickly sense the value slippage and immediately apply pressure: "ostracization, ridicule or violence, to insure his conformity."

Lest any be squeamish about this, McMurry assures that "this is a standard union tactic to 'convert' unbelievers."

It has its place in modern America, because it was Protestant values which built America, and it is Protestant values which must be restored if the nation is to continue to prosper.

McMurry cites Russia, China and Japan, and says they are beginning to prosper because Protestant-type values — notably hard work and no-nonsense behavior — are in vogue there. Here Protestant values are seen going down the drain of hedonism and permissiveness.

Robert Metz publicized the McMurry thesis in Oct. 2 *New York Times*. It read like a put-on; it sounded like a White House sermon.

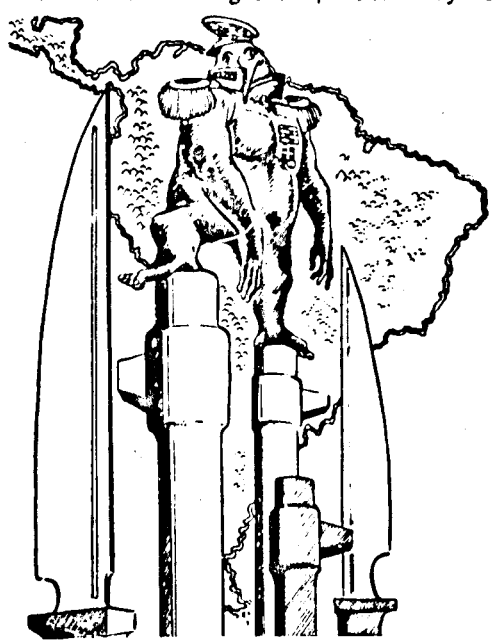
Odds and Ends

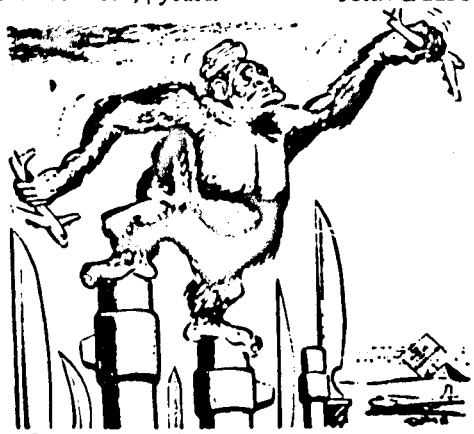
—Bill Buckley has made it official about his "learned beloved friend" Garry Wills. Wills "has taken to the Left with alcoholic gusto."

—If Manhattan College is typical, don't look for students at men's Catholic colleges to lead any moral crusade against the military. Eighty percent of Manhattan's students have indicated that the ROTC has a place on campus; 74 percent said they would serve, if drafted.

—Five years after enactment, the Highway Beautification Act, which made many road-side billboards illegal, remains paper legislation. Of some 800,000 billboards, only 334 have come down since '65. At that rate, the U.S. will be in the billboard removal business for 11,000 years.

JOHN DEEDY





Large Coincidence Department:

Left, "Latin American Policy," by Vadillo in *Ovaciones*, Mexico. Syndicated by Ben Roth Agency, June 30, 1970.

Right, "Take-Over Guy," by Dobbins in the Boston *Herald-Traveler*. Syndicated by Ben Roth Agency, Sept. 15, 1970.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Conjuring up Specters

Weston, Vt.

To the Editors: My attention has been called to a letter, written by Prof. Norton Mezvinsky and published in *Commonweal* of Sept. 25. I will not here enter into the controversy between Prof. Mezvinsky and Msgr. Oesterreicher, if only for the reason that the whole correspondence is at present not available to me. I want to point only to one thing mentioned in Prof. Mezvinsky's letter: Deir Yassin, the specter constantly conjured up by the enemies of Israel. It was twice mentioned in the *National Catholic Reporter* in recent months, and when I sent to its editor the information below, they regrettably refused to print it. I hope that the *Commonweal* will show a greater sense of justice and love of truth. Here are the facts:

Deir Yassin, together with the strategic and strongly fortified hill village of Castel, was one of the vantage points which dominated access to Jerusalem, where 150,000 Jewish civilians were in a stage of siege, fighting for their lives. Units of the Arab League attempted to cut the highway linking Jerusalem to the outside world. The pipeline was cut upon which the people in Jerusalem depended for their water supply. Deir Yassin and Castel were interconnected militarily. The "Hagana" took Castel after fierce fighting. Deir Yassin had been similarly fortified, its stone dwellings transformed into bastions. The "Irgun" decided to assault Deir Yassin. It detailed a hundred men for that purpose, poorly equipped with only light weapons, one light machine gun and some hand-grenades. A small open truck, fitted out with a loud speaker, was driven close to the village entrance and a warning was broadcast in Arabic admonishing the non-combatants to withdraw from the danger zone. Some 200 villagers took advantage of that offer. None of these was molested and

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WHO'S KIDDING WHOM?

Vice President Agnew's near-psychopathic crusade against New York's Senator Goodell tells the nation more about Spiro Agnew than it does about Goodell, and indeed more about Administration social and political priorities than it does either of the two men. For, as publicly framed, the charges against the Senator are counterfeit—as counterfeit, in a way, as the credentials of the man who utters them.

Exactly how counterfeit is demonstrated by a recent *Village Voice* article by Jack Newfield. The purpose of the Newfield article was to clarify the political differences between Republican Goodell and his Democratic opponent Richard Ottinger; the net effect, however, was to blow the smoke screen away from the Agnew-Administration grievances with Goodell.

Ostensibly these grievances are based on the fact that Goodell "consistently opposes" the President and that he "makes public opposition to all his party stands for a major article of his political faith." A quick review of the voting record renders the proposition silly. For the Goodell of record is a Goodell who has voted against rent supplements, against limiting the oil depletion allowance, against an increase of the personal income tax exemption, against a bill providing a $100-a-month minimum for social security, and in favor of the Thurmond-Lausche anti-conspiracy bill under which the Chicago 8 were indicted and tried — thoroughly Republican measures all.

Admittedly some of these votes were cast before Goodell's "great awakening"; some, on the other hand, came after his appointment to fill the unexpired term of Robert Kennedy. The *Congressional Quarterly*, researching 123 Senate votes on which President Nixon had taken a position between Jan. 1, 1969, and July 31, 1970, finds Goodell supporting the President 48 percent of the time—a percentage hardly to be categorized as 'consistent opposition' to President or party. Barry Goldwater, by contrast, supported the President on 37 percent of these votes, a detail which makes no idle claim the Goodell remark that he is a more regular Republican than Goldwater himself.

Why then go after Goodell? The upset with Goodell, of course, is that he opposed the President on the things which with Nixon count personally.

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Goodell has fought the ABM every step of the way; he voted against Haynsworth; he was the first Republican to announce against Carswell; his opposition to the war, however tardy, is unqualified. When Agnew blasts Goodell for straying "beyond the point of no return," it is the context of these matters. Further, it is no vendetta aimed at one man alone, which Agnew is spearheading. There are a number of targets. The campaign against Goodell only happens to be naked.

Kevin P. Phillips, an authoritative apologist for Republican policy, stated well what is afoot in the way-right journal *Human Events*. The President "has ideological blood in his eye," wrote Phillips; he is out to "smash," not just Goodell, but the bipartisan coalition which has worried or defeated him "on a number of key votes." Phillips itemizes these as "the ABM, Haynsworth, Carswell and Cambodian policy."

Now the Administration can be for or against all the things it wants. But when it sends the Vice President out to hatchet down political opponents, it would help to know the precise grounds. The Administration is conscientiously vague, and it is easy to understand why. Missiles, Southern-strategy appointments and the war are not the easiest preoccupations to defend.

REFORM IN CONGRESS

Reformers have been trying to re-shape the way Congress handles its affairs for years—since the last major overhaul of Congressional machinery, in fact, which took place 24 years ago. Now a reform measure has passed both House and Senate, and goes to the President for his signature, approval which certainly should be forthcoming. In both House and Senate the final vote was top-heavy in favor of reform, far more so than would have been expected in the light of the trouble the reform measure had in both chambers. Indeed, more than a year was spent in push-and-tug negotiations before a House Rules subcommittee even came up with a suggested bill. The Senate had passed a comparable measure a few years ago, but that one died a slow death in a House committee. In any case, this time the reform bill was finally passed, and if it is a long way from accomplishing everything that is needful, it does represent some genuine steps forward.

One important thing the new measure does is to strip away at least some of the secrecy which now surrounds closed-door sessions of both House and Senate committees by requiring, for the first time, that the vote of the participants in such sessions be made public. Similarly, radio and television broadcasting of committee sessions would now be permitted in the House as they are in the Senate.

Along the same lines, the reform measure also provides that House members be recorded by name as they pass up the aisle to vote on amendments. As matters now stand, votes are counted on such occasions but the names of those voting are not recorded, so that a man's constituency may never learn how he voted on a critically important amendment.

Reformers have long bewailed the excessive power of committee chairmen. As one move to curb this power, the new reform measure allows a majority of any Senate or House committee to call a meeting of that body if

Terrorism For Peace and Justice

"The Peace Movement may be escalating beyond peaceful protest, in which case it may also be escalating into self-contradiction." The words are Thomas Merton's; the confirmation is to be found in recent headlines. Christians and others who still base their opposition to war on ideals of brotherly love and non-violence face a very real challenge as to what they are going to do about their supposed allies on the far Left.

Strictly speaking, the opponents of American policy in Southest Asia who have turned to the gun and the bomb spurn the "peace movement" label, preferring instead to identify themselves as revolutionaries for whom the end of the war in Vietnam is but one limited objective. That frustration and impatience have produced this reaction is no surprise. What is surprising is the disposition on the part of those who have not reached this point of desperation to refrain from criticising it. The question has been there ever since the Berrigans and their followers turned from conventional protests that had proved ineffective to more direct assaults upon the war machine: where does one go from there if the new tactics do no better? It has now been answered, as I for one feared it would be, by a turning away from the carefully calculated nonviolence of Catonsville to an open acceptance, even affirmation, of violence as the way. "If you want peace," the young man told the 100,000 or so on Boston's Common last April, "pick up the gun!"

True, the new terrorists for peace and justice provide advance warning in the bombings they claim to have engineered; the death at the University of Wisconsin was clearly unforeseen. However, just as the Air Force's warning leaflets did not save the Vietnamese villagers to whom they were addressed, we may be certain that other such "accidents" will

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the chairman refuses or fails to do so. This provision would spell an end to the power that is now sometimes used simply to stymie discussion or block proposed legislation outright.

These are samples of the changes incorporated in the Congressional reform bill.. Where the measure falls down most obviously is in its failure to do something about the seniority system that now prevails. Despite recommendations over the years by scores of political scientists, the reform group was unable to eliminate or modify the system by which seniority alone determines committee chairmanships—one of the worst features of Congressional life today. During the debate it was pointed out that Congress is the only legislative body in the world that picks chairmen solely on the basis of seniority, but to no avail; the system proved impregnable. One can hope, then, that President Nixon will sign the present measure into law but that its framers and backers keep right on working in the good cause of Congressional reform.

occur until, finally, the stage of escalation is reached where bombings without advance warnings (and during working hours) will be the next, and by then eminently logical, step.

Traditional peace groups have done little to oppose the turn toward violence in rhetoric and act on the part of these opponents of "Amerika's" war. It is almost as if the desire to maintain some semblance of a united front is so compelling that the idealization of violence by the radical Left has become less reprehensible than it is when proclaimed by the ideologues of the Right. "Allowances" are made so freely that some spokesmen for peace find themselves maneuvered into the position of those who used to make similar allowances for Senator (Joe) McCarthy, permitting their personal disapproval of his tactics to give way before what they regard as a laudable objective. Even *The Catholic Worker* has temporized in recent issues, "understanding" the turn toward violence and, while not endorsing it, pointedly refusing to condemn it.

Many have gone beyond the posture of tolerant understanding to active support. Nor is this limited to financial contributions and moral support. Instead they will be found shaking their clenched fists and shouting the fashionable slogans, never finding it necessary to ask by whom, and how, the "power" to be given to "the People" will be exercised or whether the "political prisoners" whose release they demand were actually guilty or innocent of the crimes for which they had been arrested or convicted. I will insist with the best of them that Bobby Seale is innocent until proven guilty; but at the same time my reading of some of his writings has persuaded me that the latter possibility cannot be excluded altogether. That repression exists and must be recognized and opposed is certain. What is not so certain is that every charge brought against a self-declared advocate of violent revolution is repression. With all their known deficiencies, established judicial procedures are still to be preferred above something like the "New Haven formula," which, if read carefully, calls for the immediate release of Mr. DePugh of the Minutemen.

What troubles me most about all this is the readiness to disregard, play down, or dismiss the more strident calls for violence as "rhetorical excess" and give it no further thought. If the Nazi experience taught us anything at all, it is that rhetoric is discounted at one's own peril. Few believed that *Mein Kampf* and the Nazis meant what they said about the Jews; history records that they did. Thus when one hears the ritual chant of "off the pig" or listens to some ardent young speaker coolly going down the list of targets for destruction, it would be wise to take them pretty much at their face value. This, in turn, means that those of us who still claim to be "pacifists" or even "peace-lovers" in the traditional sense should be among the first to reject the rhetoric of violence and deny support to those who employ it.

I do not say that we must join forces with the Agnews and the Mitchells, nor even that we can no longer work with radicals in common cause against the war. What is required is that we make our principles and our limits clear and insist that any such joint efforts not involve objectives or tactics which violate those principles and limits. The peace movement has had a long and rather heroic record of firmness against those on the other side, the governments and generals who exalt war as the most efficient way of solving international problems and opposing evil. It will continue to oppose them. But it can be no less firm in opposing that same reliance on violence by others whose objectives and ideals are similar to its own. In short, the peace movement must be true to itself; and this obliges it to dissociate itself from the kind of "direct action" which would substitute revolutionary rhetoric and terrorist acts or threats for rational discourse and persuasion. Unless it can take this step and soon, Merton's grim prediction will be fulfilled, and the whole of mankind will be the worse for it. GORDON C. ZAHN

(Gordon C. Zahn is a professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts.)

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THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS

PETER STEINFELS

ANYONE AS fiercely opposed as I am to the present intervention of the U.S. in Vietnam does well frankly to admit his difficulty in evaluating not only Mr. Nixon's latest peace proposals, but *any* peace plans issuing from Washington. Such plans are inevitably presented as the logical outcome of current policy, and one who finds current policy criminal and immoral is hard put to whisper a word of approval without the sensation of implicitly approving a war effort he detests. Even worse, a favorable reception of peace proposals out of Washington runs the danger of implying a justification of renewed military ventures should those proposals come to nothing. When President Nixon declares, for example, that "A fair political solution should reflect the existing relationship of political forces in South Vietnam," I would like to be able to agree with him. But I do not want my agreement to signify that the *United States* has the divine right of defining what is a fair reflection of Vietnamese political forces, by means of a quarter million men and their accompanying deadly paraphernalia. Should the President's Five-Point Peace Plan go the way of all the other N-Point Peace Plans, and whether the fault be our unreasonableness, Saigon's unreasonableness, Hanoi's or the Vietcong's unreasonableness, or merely bad luck and poor communications, I will still believe that America's involvement in that part of the world long ago surpassed the bounds of national interest and Christian morality, and that termination should not await a more successful venture in peace-plan making.

That said, there remains the fact that Mr. Nixon's Five Points are the latest thing on the table. I can see the point of the Vietcong complaint that Mr. Nixon did not directly answer the offers they made last month (the Mid-East crisis unfortunately forced these proposals out of the news media, and U.S. spokesmen decried them as nothing new, much as the Vietcong and Hanoi have done with the Nixon points); but the President's plan is a response of sorts. Yes, it is also a response to the November elections, but provoking responses, after all, is what elections are partially about. Everything depends, it seems to me, on where we go from here; and how Washington answers the questions which each of its latest propositions naturally suggests.

1. *Standstill Cease-fire.* For Laos and Cambodia such a solution might be applied with relative ease. In South Vietnam it would either amount to an unstated Saigon victory or pose extremely delicate problems of devising "boundaries" with regard to territory where Saigon and the Vietcong share influence. Would Saigon be permitted to continue consolidating its position while the Vietcong and North Vietnamese be forbidden further supplies from the North because these involve "outside combat forces"? Would, in short, the cease-fire only be a shield for a "Korean solution" rather than lead to an alternative to it?

2. *A Larger Indochina Peace Conference.* No serious questions on this point.

3. *An Agreed Timetable for Complete U.S. Withdrawals.* This is perhaps the most critical of Mr. Nixon's points: it may be the sign Hanoi has been seeking that the U.S. really wants to clear all the way out. But the offer comes linked to an "over-all settlement . . . based on the principles (the President) spelled out previously . . ." Meaning what? Meaning the preservation of a pro-American Saigon government, if not even the present one, as certain past presidential statements have implied?

4. *A Fair Political Settlement.* The President insists that the Vietcong "demand the right to exclude whomever they wish from government." Is this true? Is it not the Thieu regime which has led in voicing exclusions? Which of the two contending parties has been most open toward the non-Communist, non-Saigon elements? Has Washington yet taken the step Senator Fulbright sees as essential, taking away from Thieu "the veto he presently exercises over American policy"?

5. *Immediate, Unconditional Exchange of Prisoners of War.* Perhaps the easiest of the points to implement. But perhaps it would be a political triumph for Mr. Nixon and a Hanoi surrender of one of the important sources of pressure on U.S. public awareness the North Vietnamese feel they hold?

Experience has taught us that one more possibility must be faced: that the Administration knows the Five Points are unacceptable, unworkable, or merely unlikely to be dealt with swiftly, and that Mr. Nixon is only riding out the election. In November, the "dry season" begins once again. *Le Monde* reports U.S. and Saigon plans for new attacks on "sanctuaries" in Vietnam and Cambodia. How tragic if the President's speech were only another deceptive calm before the storm.

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BRENDAN BEHAN

The Ignominy of Success

SEAN CALLERY

The bells of hell
Go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me.
O death where is thy
Sting-a-ling-a-ling
Or grave thy victory?
If you meet the undertaker
Or the young man from the Pru,
Get a pint with what's left over.
Now I'll say goodbye to you.

interpolated by Brendan Behan as the finale of *The Hostage.*

"Traitors, bourgeois bloodsuckers, swine," shouted Brendan Behan.

"Out with that lout and his trollop," cried a toff on the speaker's platform.

"If I was a whore itself, I'd not stop here for long," said Maeve or Nuala, or Mairhe, the girl clinging to Brendan's shabby coat, "for I know you students. You're all passion and no money."

We were in an amphitheatre of University College, Dublin in the middle of the winter of great snows, massive floods and shortages of nearly everything that makes life bearable.

Rows of outraged students were shouting behind clouds of steam their fevered breaths poured into the frigid air. They were protesting a slight to conformist, nationalist Catholic Ireland by a rude, indecently passionate intruder.

The occasion of this absurd contretemps was a meeting of the Literary and Historical Society of the University, an organization whose nomenclature is true to the tradition of Irish hyperbole. Its principal distinction, to my knowledge, is that it claims James Joyce as a former active member. This was a bright evening I recall vividly.

Let me tell you something about the university. It is a government-supported, non-sectarian (in Ireland, for practical purposes. this means Catholic), nationalist institution. It was gotten together by Irish patriots who protested the British-oriented Protestant monopoly on higher education in their country. In short, a noble attempt to provide for the gifted among the Irish peasantry and merchant and professional classes, a university in their homeland where they would neither be patronized nor proselytized by the tiny Protestant elite, whose influence and wealth were far beyond its numbers. Thus, the National University's affinities and intellectual exchanges were primarily with Louvain, Salamanca, Coimbra and the Italian universities, not Oxford and Harvard. The Latinate institutions are splendid, to be sure, but at that time thoroughly traditionalist and reeling under the pressures of purges and counter-purges due to the political upheavals and wars.

Also, Ireland's neutrality and isolation during the Second World War and the continuing, still-unresolved struggle with England to bring Northern Ireland into the autonomous Irish Republic, broadened the gap between the conventional social thought of Dublin and what advanced political and social theorists were thinking elsewhere.

The purpose of this preamble is to explain how the students of an Irish university in 1945 could seriously debate whether England's celebrated "Red Dean" of Canterbury should be allowed to speak in Ireland under

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the auspices of an Anglo-Soviet friendship organization. (Surely one of the most fatuous tactics the Party ever tried . . . an Anglican cleric to preach to the Irish masses.) Moreover the consensus among the student debaters was nay, nay to His Grace and now what could they do to provoke government action or perhaps blow up the lecture hall?

The honored guests on the dais were in tails and white tie and the students in Sunday-going-to-Mass-and-Communion finery, nicely agreeing among themselves, when suddenly an unkempt but handsome Brendan roared from an elevated tier at the rear of the amphitheatre and demanded to be heard. In accents coarse (calculatedly so, I suspect) by the standards of the average student's ultra-refined Dublin speech, he bellowed a series of egalitarian sentiments familiar enough almost anywhere else, but a novelty to his audience. Freedom to express dissent; freedom to propagandize, no matter what; the Reds are not 100 percent wrong; our country desperately needs radical social reforms . . . and so forth. He was loudly denounced on all sides and, if memory serves, forced to leave. After all he was not a university student (in fact his formal education was rudimentary).

This was the first time I saw Brendan but we met again soon and often in some of the more outlandish precincts of foggy Dublin. He had begun to circulate among the elite of Dublin's Bohemia. Headquarters was in the basement of a splendid Georgian mansion in Dublin's snootiest street. Our host, (something of his character comes out, I think, as Monsewer in "The Hostage") rented this hovel from a surgeon who was reputed to be the city's most reliable and wealthiest abortionist. His name made more than a respectable splash in the pages of the *Almanach de Gotha* and, indeed he was surely the only blue blood among us.

Regulars in attendance included many who later went on to fame and fortune. A celebrated novelist, a phenomenally successful film director, are among the alumni, but somehow their brilliance and future eminence paled by comparison to Brendan's manifest destiny.

Happily, this article is meant to be a species of memoir and though I knew Brendan for rather a long period of time, our relationship was always peripheral, with long periods of not seeing each other. As I am not obliged to create a whole character replete with clinical details, it is enough to say what I know. Many people have asked me why Brendan lived as he did and why he drank himself to death.

This is what I think. This is what I know to be at least part of the truth.

At the time of Brendan's impassioned and ill-received plea to the members of the Literary and Historical Society, University College, Dublin, he had recently been released from an Irish prison. Readers of *The Borstal Boy* know of the many years of his precious youth spent in English jails; punishment for adolescent activities in the movement to overthrow British rule in Northern Ireland.

When Brendan returned to Ireland, he joined the struggle against the De Valera government, which in the eyes of orthodox Irish Republicans had made peace with the enemy by accepting partition of the country and external ties to the British Commonwealth. Before long the Irish had him in their own jails.

We learn in *Brendan Behan's Island* that a not unfamiliar sound in his Irish prison cell was the execution of Irish revolutionaries by Irish executioners. Critics who laud *The Quare Fellow* as Brendan's greatest play are usually struck by the simplicity and power of his indictment of the sacrosanct and nearly universal institution of the deprivation of freedom, and even life itself to transgressors of the civil code. Society, jurists and priests are silent or applaud.

Here the first agony. Brendan and people like him risked all, not merely for an independent Ireland (the last thing he could justly have been called would be anti-British) but for an Ireland whose government would

be dedicated to promoting social justice. The lads and colleens who confronted him that evening at the University were by and large from privileged classes. Independence from England was an obsession to most of them, even after it had largely been attained. But for the problems of the Irish poor, they cared not at all.

It seems altogether likely to me that Brendan's point of view changed radically at just about this time. Bomb throwings and wars have a way of destroying the innocent while the wicked flourish. Ideologies kill and their victims die in vain. Isn't that part of what he said in *The Hostage*, to my way of thinking his masterpiece? The singular achievement of this play is the creation of a wildly funny story about politics, sex, religion, bogus piety and jingoism and almost everything else, with no heroes and no villains . . . only an indictment of the serpent in all of us that devours the world. In short, Brendan had shifted from hidebound partisan politics, to love of all humanity and hated only those things in people that make them less true to their most charitable instincts.

The Borstal Boy, The Hostage, The Quare Fellow Brendan Behan's Island, and the wonderful short essays

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and stories . . . a truly distinguished and original body of work in those short years he was at it. Brendan had arrived professionally, and therein, I believe, lay the seeds of his personal destruction. For he had lost the very thing he prized most in life . . . an authentic connection with the working people of Dublin or wherever else he lived. Brendan was now "Brendan Behan the Celebrity" in working class bars and he was never to recapture the feeling of solidarity and identity that was essential to his having a real hold on this earth. In short, Brendan's affluence and success and fame had separated him from the only society he really cherished. And, the other side of the coin, he was subjected on all sides to the adulation of people he loathed. Eventually he would have had enough and one of his well publicized explosions would occur.

Alas, he was also "Brendan Behan the Celebrity" among the sycophants and imbeciles of Madison Avenue, television alley and café society. People who never read a line he wrote or saw one of his plays, surrounded him in posh watering places and boasted for weeks afterwards about the night they met Brendan Behan, the spectacular drunk and dispenser of vitriol. Most of his barbs went over the heads of this type of audience, but no matter, no matter, they had had a drink with Brendan Behan.

An Authentic Star

I cannot easily describe Brendan's extraordinary magnetism, drunk or sober. When he first arrived in New York for rehearsals of the Broadway production of *The Hostage* he had been off the sauce for quite a while and was nicely and consistently compos mentis. Typically, he agreed to be a drawing card for a backers' party in connection with a disastrous theatrical venture in which I was involved. My living room was full of Maureen Stapleton, Lauren Bacall, The Clancy Brothers, Skitch Henderson, Paul O'Dwyer and people with check books and fountain pens. Yet all sat in rows on the floor and gazed upward at Brendan as he sang hilarious and obscene parodies of the most gauche, commonplace Irish ballads. In short, we were in the presence of an authentic star, whose act was a single and impossible to follow.

The months went by and Brendan went back to the bottle, back to Ireland and England and then showed up suddenly and without warning in New York. I saw nothing of him until a few weeks before he left America forever. He had given up smart bars completely and wandered from saloon to saloon in a fairly regular pattern. Occasionally someone from television would go down to the Chelsea Hotel, where he and Beatrice lived, and drag him off to a panel show or something intended to be a serious discussion: theatricals that were distinguished by some of the frankest remarks ever offered to an audience of millions. At that time I was executive director of the New York Council for a SANE Nuclear Policy and imposed upon him to be star for one of the cause's fund-raising parties. Brendan was almost comatose that afternoon in Great Neck, I heard. (The effort to get him into the car the committee had provided, was too much for me; I stayed behind in Chelsea.)

Yes, Brendan was really and truly lost. Our rounds roughly corresponded at that time, and I observed that Brendan never failed to attempt establishing common ground with people whose childhoods may have resembled his own but who were now light-miles away from his experience in this world. One really dangerous bar was off-limits, at least Beatrice tried to enforce this interdict. (It has since been shuttered by the police.) On one of the few occasions when Brendan had a significant amount of hard cash on his person, a youth, who volunteered to see him back to his hotel from this bar (a service he desperately required at that moment) relieved him of his money.

Yet a few days later, not being able to find Brendan in any of his usual haunts, at Beatrice's request I looked into the very cesspool mentioned above. Brendan was there and said he was looking for the thief. I asked him why, since I was certain that nothing on God's good earth could induce him to report the miscreant to the police. Ah, the truth is that pimps and whores, pickpockets and hopheads were a more congenial crowd for Brendan to hang out with and really more honorable in his view, than the vulgarly successful people of this world who make money on everyone they meet and imagine they are storing up riches for themselves in Heaven at the same time. Unlike the mob at the Silver Rail, middle-class bandits might not even buy their victims a drink.

Now, I do not mean to convey the impression that Brendan was merely an ordinary proletarian snob; although his class feelings seemed to be among the most ardent I have ever encountered outside of the alumni of the activist Union Square days.

A vivid, and I believe, significant memory of mine is sitting in a bar with him and Beatrice watching a television discussion that had been filmed the day before. Brendan was drunk and eloquent on the telly and drunk and a little self-satisfied at our table. We were watching him discuss (if that is the proper word) something with Cecil Woodham-Smith, authoress of *The Great Hunger*, the definitive account of Ireland's cataclysmic national disaster, the famine of the middle 19th century. Miss Smith's book is one of genius, of originality; an absolutely unique explanation of how and why a group of enlightened and middlingly-moral statesmen sent troops to Ireland to seize its produce, shipped it out of the country, and then left the Irish to die of starvation. It is also a book of extraordinary and deeply-felt compassion.

The authoress is unmistakably an aristocrat, a lady and an English woman. Brendan treated her with some-

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thing like adoration; one might almost say that he was overcome with emotions of gratitude, respect and empathy. The other panelist on this telecast (I forgot what the subject was supposed to be) was an art critic on a New York daily with an excruciatingly affected, toney Irish accent; a sonorous Gaelic name, a sleek, cared-for and burnished appearance, the end product, I suspect, of a desperate attempt to destroy all evidence of origins discernibly less exalted than lineal descendance from the High Kings of Ireland. It soon became eminently clear that this young Philistine had never perceived a connection between the artist's vocation and a ready recognition of, and preoccupation with, all human suffering. Brendan gave him hell! Glory be—even on television, fools are sometimes called down.

Brendan had not fallen from Grace according to the Credo of his ancestors and his childhood. For it is a tradition among the common people of Ireland that the wealthy are wicked, and poverty, weakness and failure are respected if not always assiduously sought: a pristine Christianity that advanced, industrialized societies have forgotten. Incredible as it may seem, I don't think Brendan ever divined that Americans believe the best Christians are those who go to church incessantly and write the largest checks for the church building fund.

Morning Ceremonials

Bars, bars . . . they necessarily loom very large in any account of Brendan Behan. For many years, one of my early morning retreats has been the famous spa of the late Timothy Costello (May He Rest in Peace) on Third Avenue near Forty-Fourth Street. Its chief bartender, Honest John Gallagher, used to preside over the morning ceremonials. Large dinner rolls and butter, coffee and cognac, to get the lousy day started. Now it happens that John has a friend who is a housepainter, who lives in his neighborhood and frequently drives him to the restaurant in the morning. My most poignant memory of Brendan is seeing him stand outside of Costello's after a bad night waiting for the doors to open. Brendan had also been a housepainter in his youth and was proud of his trade. He and John's housepainter friend repaired to a booth and traded opinions on the techniques of plastering and mixing, and swapped stories of housewives they had dallied with while the first coat was drying on the walls. One had to do something before picking up the brushes again.

It was the closest he got to the not so bad old days.

Time passed and then one sunny, menacing morning early in the summer of 1963 I chanced to meet Brendan at the bar of Mr. Richard Foran, publican of West 23rd Street, in old Chelsea. Our host, a splendid figure of a man, whose physique serves him well and often in his trade, is rarely given to sentimental display, yet he was mewing earnestly and movingly at a mother cat and her brood and clearly resented our presence, a mere t minutes after official curtain time.

Foran's is a marred relic of Chelsea's Irish ascendanc A retreat for elderly regular Democratic precinct worke to be sure, but also frequented by a rather dangero looking young crowd and many persons of all ages who pure Hibernian ancestry is a matter of rather serio doubt. It strongly resembles many working class bars marginal areas of the city where Brendan seemed to relatively less displaced. A great deal of its charm me, and, I suspect, to Brendan then, is the ease a frankness with which simple people offer their opinion no matter how outrageous they may be. As when elderly Irish lady, trembling mightily and scarcely ab to raise her glass to her lips, explained the defeat of t old line machine Democrats in a primary election. "A those Communists who moved into the new union c operative voted for their Red friends." Not at all a b analysis of the suicidal war among Democrats, Regul and Reform, if the addled terms are translated properl

At any rate, there we were at the bar, and Brend ordered a gin for himself and after a few caustic a obscene remarks agreed that I might shamefully dissipa my patrimony and limit myself to a glass of beer. I h decided to make a mild start that morning.

These were bad days for himself and he looked it. H eyes were clouded and troubled and gazed upon objec surely not of his immediate surroundings and perha not of this world. The contours of his tattered sh were those of an ancient washboard and uncombe matted curls dangled perilously close to his collar. H weaved in and out of express city traffic with a panac that must have reduced the life span of untold numbe of motorists and he even survived the malevolent a vances of hoods in some of New York's worst div Not always unscathed, it is true, but at least ambula and with vital organs intact. But Brendan did not la purpose and direction. He was a man on the way to t loving arms of Jesus and he wooed death passionate

That is, more or less, what I would like to talk abc in this piece.

Back to Foran's. I tore myself away from the pus cats and the beer and Brendan and a newly-arriv crone who was pounding the juke box with her fis and later her pocketbook, beside herself with rage a frustration. At a difficult and alcoholic moment in h life, the lady evidently believed the pay phonograph be a conventional instrument that ought to respond her assaults as might a piano or possibly a bass dru A powerful kick in what would have been a most sen tive area had the instrument been animate, and the was suddenly and piercingly aquiver with "sure th scorn us just for bein' what we are." Like all true artis she had found a unique method of expression. T proprietor's indifference remains unexplained.

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In any case, it was certainly time for me to leave. Brendan's wife, Beatrice, had invited me to join them for a farewell drink on the Queen Mary that afternoon. They were returning to Ireland.

Brendan was a different man by four that afternoon. He held court for the Press and the Cunard Line public relations people in a restrained, one might almost say, suave manner. The *Daily News* photographers succeeded in extracting a conventional *bon voyage* pose from him, with a broad smile and one arm around Beatrice and another around his general factotum, Rae Jeffs. A passing priest accepted a drink but good naturedly declined to bless a tray of cocktails. Brendan allowed as he would do it himself but he was a little shaky on the Latin. His hair was cut and combed and a presentable suit had replaced the morning's outrageous costume. There was even something like a cultivated, cared-for sheen about his complexion. Only the astonishing void where his teeth should have been reminded one that he had not took the shilling nor slid down the shoot onto the Madison Avenue dung heap.

This all seemed a bad omen to me and as it turned out, it was the last time I saw Brendan. It was also the last time Brendan saw one of his great loves, New York.

Epilogue

Brendan's night bar and one of mine was the Oasis, closest to his home at the Chelsea Hotel. Not infrequently, its proprietor, Willy Garfield, a kindly and prudent man, who knew when one of his customers had had enough, would arrange for someone to see that Brendan got home safely.

Willy and Brendan died within days of each other.

When I had the heart to return to the Oasis, I asked Willy's widow, a sentimental, archetypal Jewish matron of Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, to have a drink with me at the bar. I commiserated with her on the recent death of her husband, whom I loved dearly. With the ready sympathy and damp sentiment about all matters related to death and illness that I have observed to be especially profound among Jews, Jean said, "Yes, and poor Brendy too" and cast her eyes Heavenward. Then she sighed movingly and added, as she touched her glass to mine, "Well, they're together now."

At that moment I am sure we shared a vision. Willy with a bar in Paradise, throwing Brendan out now and then but seeing that he made it safely to his celestial pad.

But now the drinks are on old Jesus.

He Envisaged a Cross-Pollination of Art and Politics That Would Make Witnesses of Both

BETWEEN SOLITUDE AND SOLIDARITY

BERNARD MURCHLAND

I began reading Camus in the early fifties. As that "uninspired decade" wore on his influence on me grew as did my desire to meet him. Over the Christmas holidays in 1959 I finally got around to writing his publishers to arrange for an interview. That letter was never answered, for reasons that soon became tragically apparent. Less than a week later Albert Camus was dead.

One measure of a man's importance is the way his death affects us. I felt Camus' death profoundly for to me an important voice had been stilled and a great talent cut short before reaching its fullest expression. I wrote the following in an obituary note at that time: 'A tree is judged by its fruits and Camus' works are filled with a love of mankind, a sanity and a hope that are hard to match in the annals of modern writing. It is true that he went through his dark nights of anguish; that he was tempted to despise the world and hate men; that he wrestled with and almost succumbed to an overwhelming sense of absurdity. But his revolt against such temptations is as admirable as anything he ever admired in others."

Ten years later I still think that the theme of revolt is what is most basic in Camus' writings, infusing them with enduring and dramatic substance. Revolt is man's creative protest against an absurd world. It is both a statement about the nature of reality and an attitude towards it, stressing the individual over abstractions, nature over history and respect for a sense of limit. From this point of view Rieux remains Camus' best defined character. He did his job and had his victories; at the same time he was wary of big words and fully conscious of the nature of his enemy. Large concepts like sanctity, salvation or revolution concerned him little. "What interests me is being a man," he tells Tarrau, after the latter had tried to explain his rather vague conception of secular sainthood. And to Paneloux, whose bag of theological tricks enabled him to justify the death of a child in terms of a higher love, Rieux said: "No, Father, I've a very different idea of love. And until my

BERNARD MURCHLAND *has a new book due from Random House,* The Age of Alienation.

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dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture."

This idea of revolt was inspired in part by the classical tradition Camus was so fond of, with its emphasis on unity and the rhythms of nature. But, I believe, it owes more to his analysis of contemporary political realities, particularly revolutionary ideologies. He observed that modern revolutions invariably end by reinforcing the power of the state and justifying bloodshed. Revolutionaries begin by demanding justice, Camus noted, and end by establishing a police force. Total revolution aims at total control of the world. The wholesale political murders of the 20th century were to him the surest proof that any form of revolt that places some abstract end over the concrete demands of life itself is infected with the very nihilism it proposes to overcome. To argue that people must be killed or the sum of human suffering increased in any way in the name of some future benefit is to set in motion a dialectic of violence that soon turns rebels into tyrants.

Camus considered the two main forms of revolt to be political action and artistic creation, and some of his best writing deals with the relationship between the two. Both must correct creation by transforming it in light of imaginatively discerned ideals. Both must rise to the defense of human happiness and the preservation of life. In an age such as ours, when tyranny threatens on all sides, the artist cannot remain silent. And while it is difficult to maintain one's equilibrium on the narrow ridge between the ivory tower and the political arena, between solitude and solidarity, it is precisely there that "the creative attitude which reconciles aesthetic demands with the duty of brotherhood" is born and nourished. Camus envisaged a kind of cross pollination between art and politics that would make of both witnesses to man's freedom and dignity. It is, he wrote, "worth more to be wrong without killing anyone and allowing others to talk, than to be right in the midst of silence and charnel-houses." His emphasis upon the principle of limit, upon a due measure in things, was in the final analysis a way of affirming life.

The left never had much use for this aspect of Camus' work and ever since 1952, when he was anathametized by the Sartrian circle, it has been often denounced. With his most recent book (*Albert Camus of Europe and Africa*, Viking) Conor Cruise O'Brien joins this chorus and argues that Camus' effort to establish a viable equation between art and politics was vitiated by his inability to come to terms with his experience as a colonial in Algeria. O'Brien proposes "to ask some questions and register the existence of some blank areas regarding the social and political context of Camus' work." He notes, first of all, that Camus was primarily a Frenchman who had no "living relation" to the Arabic population of Algeria and goes on to state that the themes of estrangement in his early works were generated by h status as a colonist. "Camus is a stranger on the Africa shore, and surrounded by people who are strangers i that France of which they are legally supposed to be part. The splendidly rationalist system of education whic molded Camus was propagating, in relation to his ow social context, a myth: that of French Algeria."

Adopting this hypothesis, O'Brien proceeds to a exegesis of Camus' works. He rejects the standard inte pretation of Meursault as an alienated anti-hero wh rebels against an unjust and oppressive society. In fac he says, Meursault is rather insensitive to cruelty ar injustice. Quite apart from his indifference to the memo of his mother and the feelings of his mistress, he watch with amusement as a neighbor beats his dog and ente readily into a scheme to inflict punishment upon friend's Arabic girlfriend (and later lies to the police i his defense). The Arabs in the novel are nameles they are compared to lizards, to blocks of stone ar dead trees. It is throughout as though Camus did n consider them quite human. But it is in the courtroo scenes that O'Brien finds the novel's basic flaw. Is realistic to suppose that a French court in Algeria wou impose the death sentence on a European for shoo ing an armed Arab? Why wasn't the plea of self-defen made central in the proceedings? By suggesting that th law treats Arab and Frenchmen as equals, Camus "im plicitly denies the colonial reality and sustains th colonial fiction." In the trial it is not so much the kil ing as Meursault's attitude toward his mother that stressed. O'Brien opines that this is a bit of sleight-o hand by means of which the murder is made to seem i relevant, as though one Arab more or less didn't real matter. Like his creator, O'Brien concludes, Meursault keen and realistic in recording his own feelings but i different and often in error about his society. Camu own colonial experience is "relevant to what rings tr in the book, the direct, unsentimentalized experien evoked in the first half; and to what rings hollow, th artful staging of the trial and the pathos and rhetor of the prison dialogues."

Similarly with *The Plague*, although here the Ar question is not merely distorted. It is simply abolishe This is all the more ironic, O'Brien writes, in that v are informed at the beginning of the novel that livi conditions among the Arabs were serious enough to a tract a reporter from a large Paris newspaper and D Rieux urges him to "condemn totally." It would be o thing to make no mention of the Arabs at all, an omi sion that could be justified by the nature of th allegory. But to introduce them as a preliminary "to th story of a city in which they have no existence" a this moreover in a context of total honesty and integrit is a serious weakness. This in turn points to a flaw the analogy between the plague and the German o

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cupiers. Camus the Frenchman could quite naturally think of Oran as a French city beset by the Nazi plague. But, asks O'Brien, what about the Arab population for whom French Algeria was a fiction quite as repugnant as the fiction of Hitler's new European order was for Camus? Hadn't the French "conquered" Algeria in much the same way as the Germans conquered France? Viewed in this light, Rieux and his comrades were not so much rebels against the plague as the plague itself. When Camus has Rieux predict the return of the plague he probably couldn't have imagined that, as far as Algeria was concerned, it would erupt from precisely that segment of the population that was so conveniently ignored in the novel.

O'Brien argues his point with some skill. But when all is said and done it is only a point, one aspect of a complex body of work. To insist upon it in an exclusive fashion is to distort. Because he ignores so much that is more important than the colonial question in Camus' work, O'Brien is guilty of such a distortion. Indeed, his emphasis sometimes leads him quite simply into error, as when he states dogmatically that Camus never did come to terms with the Algerian question and that his journalistic writings "are the record of his painful and protracted failure to do so." Here again he is reading with only one eye, his left one, and only succeeds in reinforcing the myth of Camus as an abstract moralist, frozen in historical immobility. Still, he realizes that Camus was primarily an artist and not some sort of political scientist and in the end his judgment of him is a generous one: "Probably no European writer of his time left so deep a mark on the imagination and, at the same time, on the moral and political consciousness of his own generation and the next." This seems to be an admission that Camus did at least on occasion successfully combine artistic truth with the ideals of political justice and freedom.

Roger Quilliot's recently translated *The Sea and Prisons* (University of Alabama Press) offers a more objective analysis of Camus and the Algerian problem. It also contains an excellent commentary on *The Rebel*, a book that is essential to an understanding of Camus' political thinking. O'Brien pays scant attention to it and this may be one reason why he fails to do justice to Camus' position on the Algerian question. It is no paradox that this was the book that occasioned the final break between Camus and the left-wing intelligentsia and more than any other earned him the reputation of a rightist moralizer seeking his comfort in the feathered nest of bourgeois virtues. For the questions *The Rebel* raised cut to the existentialist quick: what made men torture their fellows so wantonly? Why had the revolutions of the past two centuries led so inexorably to wholesale violence and murder? How much bloodshed should be tolerated in the hope that things would eventually change for the better?

Camus reasoned that both the right and the left were wrong. To the conservatives he said: evil is not something we must suffer passively, as a matter of destiny. Revolt is always legitimate and always necessary. To the left he said: a due measure, a sense of the relative is necessary if revolt is to be effective. Present needs must come before future goals. Happiness exists; why offer it up on the altar of historical determinism? He charged that the excesses of modern revolutions were thwarted attempts to rape the absolute, to establish a utopian order that demands human sacrifice in order to be realized. Camus steadfastly maintained that no appeal to future ends could justify present suffering and he further stated that the center of values is the individual person rather than an impersonal historical dialectical. He illustrated his argument with references to de Sade, to the Romantic lust for totality, to fascism. But everyone suspected that what he really had in mind was Communism.

And that is true enough. But this was wrongly interpreted as a defense of right-wing values, for hadn't Camus rejected Christianity for precisely the same reasons he rejected Marxism? Both postpone human happiness to some time in the distant future. And his contempt for the bourgeois order was unwavering. Its crime, he wrote, was to have exploited its power "to the ends of a mediocre society lacking in true nobility . . . which derives its pleasures from the work of millions of dead souls." *The Rebel*, Quilliot points out, equally denounces the bloody mystifications of revolutionary totalitarianism and the disguised oppression of tired capitalism. It was Camus' declaration of independence, a public avowal that he was unable to subscribe to the current ideologies of the West and that he would follow the logic of his position whithersoever it led. It led increasingly to the chilly frontier of solitude.

He stood on that frontier throughout the Algerian crisis. He condemned the oppression and terror on both sides, seeing in them yet another expression of that nihilism which leads to needless bloodshed and the suffering of the innocent. He wrote in *L'Express* that he would "place himself in the no man's land between two armies and preach, in the midst of bullets, that war is a deception and that bloodshed, if it sometimes carries history forward, carries it forward to further cruelty and

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suffering." Power and justice, he added, lose all meaning in the middle of a graveyard. O'Brien holds that Camus' political writings on the Algerian war are "categorical, equivocal, abstract" and on the whole a defense of the French government's position. But such a charge ignores Camus' long and anguished involvement in the affair, his frequent defense of Arab nationalist leaders, his long-standing disgust with the government's policy and, above all, the fact that he proposed a rather detailed program of action favoring an Algerian Federation that would grant the Arabs considerably more autonomy than the French wanted to give them. At the same time he defended the right of the French population to remain in Algeria. Why uproot another million people in the name of expediency? What could possibly be gained by such an action?

Camus always retained a certain sympathy for the kind of violence that strikes out at the guilty but the blind terrorism that sanctioned the killing of the innocent to the end repelled him. In February, 1957, he decided on silence concerning Algeria in order "to add neither to her misfortune nor to the stupidities that have been written with respect to the subject." A refusal of history? Bourgeois moralism? Red Cross sermonizing? Such accusations were hurled at him. And it must be admitted that the Algerian problem confused him. Drained by the bitter controversy over *The Rebel*, slowed down by ill health and emotionally involved with the fate of his own country—it was not an easy path! When he said in Sweden: "I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice," he was typically putting the concrete before the abstract. O'Brien's comment upon this is a nasty one: "The defense of his mother required support for the French army's pacification of Algeria." But Quilliot seems to me more nearly right when he remarks that the Algerian tragedy emphasized some of the constants in Camus' thought: the horror of a world of violence, disgust for uselessly spilled blood, instinctive repulsion in face of intolerance and fanaticism. All of this, he says, amounts to a kind of "liberal pacificism that is poorly adapted to those cycles of revolt and repression to which the modern world seems to be condemned. Camus was henceforth an exile not only in his own country, but in his own century, and all the more painfully in that he shared its passions."

The uncertainty and depression of Camus' last year were reflected in *The Fall*. Clamence is part religious mystic crying out for salvation; part left-wing intellectual awash in his own abstractions; part modern man at the end of his tether. But he is also in good part Camus himself examining his conscience, purging his soul of bitterness and bad faith behind a protective margin of irony and humor. It is as though he were doing penance for all the sins Sartre, Jeanson and others had accused him of, confessing that he was indeed the self-righteous bourgeois who had carried about his own portable pedestal. How difficult it is, we seem to hear him say, for a mere mortal to distinguish between lies and the truth! The winding canals of Amsterdam symbolize an ambiguous world in which everything divides by two: exile and the kingdom, life and death, solitude and solidarity, innocence and guilt, dream and reality, the metaphysical longing for unity and the brokenness of the world—in short, the sea and prisons.

"I have brought to light the profound duplicity of the human creature," exclaims Clamence. Camus lived these duplicities in his own experience. He knew how easily Christianity generated inquisitions, how Marxism floundered in Stalinism, how the existential cry for freedom yoked itself to the necessities of history. In this respect Camus comes full circle in *The Fall*, going back to the insight of his early *L'envers et l' endroit*, and the old temptations to nihilism and cynicism once more threatened to engulf him. And once again the principle of limit reasserts itself. In an ambiguous world where the pendulum swings abruptly and irrationally from one extreme to another, a sense of due measure which conjoins opposites becomes the supreme goal of moral striving. As Camus put it in his Stockholm speech, the highest form of art strives to achieve "a balance between the real and the denial that man opposes to the real. The world is nothing and the world is everything: this is the double and tireless cry of every true artist."

I think O'Brien is right to point out that *The Fall* reflects Camus' inability to please either side in the Algerian controversy. Like Daru in *The Guest* he was doubly summoned and doubly failed. "Clamence's paralysis on the bridge corresponds to that of his creator, before the conflicting call of what he had thought of as his country. The laughter which follows him . . . is provoked by the discrepancy of what he has been saying and how he behaves." And this conclusion: "If France in Algeria was unjust, then it was justice that had to go, yielding place to irony. Rieux and Tarrou make way for Jean-Baptiste Clamence." But again, O'Brien exaggerates. Matters were never simple for Camus. His irony was the outcome of a rich sense of ambiguity rather than the either-or variety of philosophy that characterizes ideologues.

I wonder, too, that O'Brien's claim that had Camus joined his voice to that of Sartre and his circle he would have "rallied opinion more decisively and earlier against imperialist wars." This assumes, among other things, that the Sartrian position was the correct one, a highly arguable assumption. It is regrettable, of course, that the quarrel did nothing to bring about a meeting of minds between two influential leaders. But the issues they disputed were not clear-cut. Fundamentally the dispute was about the nature of man. I think Sartre's reply to Camus was much too facetious. His verbal acrobatics and frequent lapses into *ad hominem* arguments seem to have distracted him (as they certainly distract the reader) from

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the questions Camus posed, especially his queries concerning the relationship between revolution and killing. Sartre basically took the position that the end justifies the means and did not squarely face the objection that he had failed in his attempt to wed Marxism and Existentialism. In his reply Sartre had said: "A brake cannot be applied to liberty. It has no wheels. Neither has it hoofs or jaws in which to put a bit." Camus called this "liberty without restraint" and warned that it heralds a nihilism in which all values are swallowed up. Thus it was finally the Mediterranean Camus who offended Sartre, the Camus who advocated and spelled out a moderate ethic postulated upon a common human nature. To make oneself historical "in order to undertake the eternal" (as Sartre had put it) was merely another way of deifying man and legitimatizing the horrors of modern revolutions.

Judging from this point in time, it seems to me Camus was very right about one thing. The plague has returned. It is among us in the countless wars and revolutions that take their daily toll in human life. And where the plague is Camus' voice remains relevant, even when it is not conclusive.

STANDARD BRANDS

THE STAGE

A playwright's name, like any other standard brand, tells the regular theater-goer what to expect. Read the label on Bruce Jay Friedman: energy, ethnic jokes and the schlemiel as hero. Check the tag on the late Joe Orton: sex, death, madness, perversion — all subheads under *good, clean fun*. Only a remarkable playwright upsets the expectations. *Steambath* and *What the Butler Saw* prove how unremarkable Friedman and Orton are.

At first glance, one might think that *Steambath* is some kind of breakthrough for Friedman. Not because it is an eschatological comedy with God as a Puerto Rican steamroom attendant, but because his protagonist is apparently a Wasp. Yiddish words sprinkle his speech, it is true, but what Wasp among us has failed to pick up a working Yiddish vocabulary from television talk shows. Perhaps it was an accident of production rather than the author's intention that let a whisper of innovation into the role, for it is the presence of Anthony Perkins that makes the character so middle American. Not that it matters finally, for Tandy is nothing more than a *goyisher* variation on the standard Friedman hero, the helpless, hopeless cluck who stumbles through life, demanding his rights as the quicksand of circumstance closes over him. This time, we meet him in a steambath which is supposed to be an anteroom to oblivion but which seems more like that Riviera villa in *Scuba Duba*, an excuse to bring together a band of caricatures. Tandy, who imagines that he has just begun to bring order to his troubled life, spends the play trying to convince God that he should not be dead. When he gets a chance to plead his case at the end of the second act, his self-analysis is his own judgment; as he describes his new, positive life it comes across as empty, ugly, pointless. He quits struggling and accepts death.

If we were to take it seriously, *Steambath* would be a harshly pessimistic play in the best *angst* tradition. Tandy's story and its context (the Puerto Rican God and his mechanical miracle machine) posit a meaningless life in a random universe. Such a statement can be made in a comic framework (Beckett keeps making it), but Friedman's talent is too fragile and self-indulgent for that kind of comedy. He trots out his usual gags (homosexual jokes, race jokes, failed-marriage jokes), decorated with gee-I-live-in-your-world references (Whip n' Chill, Bloomingdale's). He cheerfully sacrifices character and situation to the casual line, reaching for laughs like an hysterical amateur who sees the hook coming. The play is finally dispiriting.

If *Steamboat* begins to seem like *Outward Bound* with the fun gone out of it, it at least offers the consolation of some good performances, particularly from Perkins, Hector Elizondo and Conrad Bain. Nothing so comforting can be said of *What the Butler Saw*, for the Orton play is being offered in the worst production I have seen in New York in years. Since *Butler* is a substanceless play, totally dependent on its staging, the result is a disaster. Taking a clue from the artificiality implicit in the cheerful putrescence of his earlier work—*Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, for instance—Orton turned in his last play to more traditional farce. A sex-and-identity mix-up in a madhouse, *Butler* provides an opportunity for a number of resolutely confused characters to stampede through some potentially funny physicial business, dropping presumably comic lines as they run. These last struck me as not very funny when I read the play, but I can imagine that some of them might be amusing if they were delivered with the utmost solemnity, the kind of unsmiling earnestness that farce demands. Here, unfortunately, every line is delivered as though it were written in flashing neon. Lucian Scott, in the role that Ralph Richardson played in England, is the worst offender. Back on the New York stage after forty years on the college circuit, Scott leers, snorts, sniffs and splutters his way through the part, turning his performance into a moving cue card commanding the audience LAUGH. Since no cast could have happened onto a performance this bad, I assume that the person most to blame is Scott's old student, Joseph Hardy; he directed the play to death. Orton was no great shakes as a playwright, but he deserves better than he is getting in this production.

GERALD WEALES

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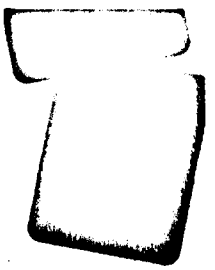
BEWARE OF 'LITERATURE BOYS'!



Nathaniel West: The Art of His Life
JAY MARTIN

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $10

SAUL MALOFF

In the spring of 1939, when he was revising for the printer the manuscript of *The Day of the Locust*, which was to prove his last book, Nathaniel West had an exact sense of his predicament. He knew how good a novel he had written, the best he had done so far—which is to say one of the best American novels of the century; but he also knew that despite his great hopes of more general acclaim, he seemed doomed to be a writers' writer. His three previous novels — *The Dream Life of Balso Snell, Miss Lonelyhearts, A Cool Million*—together with the advance on the new one had netted him the grand sum of scarcely more than a thousand dollars—roughly three weeks' middling pay for hacking in one of the shabbiest of Hollywood studios. He had hoped at least to buy time for his serious work, but his publisher, Random House, thought the author of *Miss Lonelyhearts* "unreasonable" in asking $1,000, and countered with an offer of $250, which West felt obliged to accept, though this, he knew, would tie him to the studios until the famous day when he had put enough aside to underwrite a long leave. If he was deeply disheartened, he was also only thirty-six, and a life full of novels lay ahead of him; and if the great American public didn't know he was alive, the writers he cared about did.

He wrote out of this state of mind in a letter to his friend Scott Fitzgerald, who also knew something of disappointment. Thirty years after West's death it is moving to listen to his voice, the voice of a writer precisely aware of the cost, to the penny, of integrity; and of his powers, indeed of his place in American letters—all of it free of cant and both false pride and false modesty, an act of self-knowledge and self-criticism as well as total fidelity to his singular gift, which was even more difficult than it usually is in the Thirties when writers were buffeted by severe ideological pressures and art was so disastrously confused with politics to the corruption of both. "Somehow or other," he writes Fitzgerald, "I seem to have slipped in between all the 'schools.' My books meet no needs except my own, their circulation is practically private and I'm lucky to be published. And yet I only have a desire to remedy all that *before* sitting down to write, once begun I do it my way. I forget the broad sweep, the big canvas, the shot-gun adjectives, the important people, the significant ideas, the lessons to be taught, the epic Thomas Wolfe, the realistic James Farrell—and go on making what one critic called 'private and unfunny jokes.' "

On the next day, as if it were a postscript to the Fitzgerald letter, he wrote his friend Edmund Wilson delineating the opposition. The "radical press," he wrote, "doesn't like (my work), and thinks it even Fascist sometimes, and the literature boys, whom I detest, detest me in turn. The highbrow press finds that I avoid the important things and the lending library touts in the daily press think me shocking . . . because there is nothing to root for in my books, and what is even worse, no rooters."

There has been, after long neglect, save in the underground where his work occupied an important place in the modern canon, a growing body of critical literature, including a numb of studies devoted wholly to his wo but until now no full-dress critic biography. Moreover, Jay Martin *Nathaniel West: The Art of His L* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 435 p $10.) is the biography authorized West's sister and brother-in-law, t S. J. Perelmans, and so it is not like there will be another in the foreseeab future, which is a great pity, for Martin it is West's lot to have fall into the hands of one of the "literatu boys." Fashions and tastes change, a so do literature boys: whereas those West's time may have "detested" h work, their heirs now enshrine him graduate seminars, designated in u versity catalogs, more than likely, "The Kafkaesque Novel in America

Granted, a man's life is too turbule a river—too wide an *ocean*—to gras and unless we are simply to declare moratorium on biographies, probab the best we can ever hope for is over-poweringly plausible portrait, series of portraits, of the many-facet subject set in a constructed landsca composed of the artifacts and oth persons most obviously significant his life; so that we can, when the po trait is most persuasive, give our u grudging assent, recognize it immed ately without reading the identifyi plaque. Yes, we say of such works, th man and no other wrote the book loved the women, kept faith with betrayed the friendships, resisted yielded to the exigencies, mystified h parents, committed the incompreh sible acts, fired the murderous suicidal gun — or, as in the case West, drove a car past a stop sig killing himself and his wife of less tha a year, Ruth's sister Eileen McKenne when he knew perfectly well he w color blind and scandalously car-acc dent prone—to say nothing of his b ing (as we can readily imagine) deep unsettled by that day's news that Sco Fitzgerald had died the day before; an Lord knows what else.

In their vast biographies of Hemin way and Sinclair Lewis, respectivel Carlos Baker and Mark Schorer, co

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scientious and compendious as they are, tell us nothing (all right, next to nothing) we didn't already know or couldn't imagine; and this is true of the late Andrew Turnbull's biographies of Wolfe and Fitzgerald, sensitive and scrupulous as he was. But, on the other hand, though she tells us nothing particularly *new* of that well-known man Fitzgerald, Lillian Hellman in a brief scene, little more than a few paragraphs (in *An Unfinished Woman*) confirms and deepens so much of what we knew of his last, sad years in a loving, heartbreaking glimpse of him, trembling with terror, on his way to a Hollywood party at Dorothy Parker's house given in honor of Ernest Hemingway, who had just returned from Spain to collect money for the Republic; and so does Nancy Milford expand our sense of him in *Zelda*, though in a drastically different way. Now, what Martin does is to plant his own person thickly between us and West so that though we see Martin plain, West remains wholly obstructed from view; and Martin establishes his own voice so insistently that, except for an occasional whisper, we can't hear West's. Lillian Hellman (to use her as a cudgel for the last time) makes two passing references to West in her memoir: in the first she merely mentions days and evenings in Bucks County spent in the company of the Perelmans and West: and in the second she speaks of, without illustrating, West's "wonderfully original mind." That quality is nowhere (all right, next to nowhere) present in this large book.

The man who in this book bears "Pep" West's name (actually he was born Nathan Weinstein) and whose sodden presence most depressingly deadens it is never "wonderfully original" (except when he's allowed a word or two in an infrequent letter); and when I say this West could never have written the marvelous novels, I am as aware as the literature boys (being one myself) of the notorious hazards of confusing life with art, a man with his work. Martin's West was a boy who had bungled his way through high school (he never graduated), lied his way into Tufts for a brief sojourn, and then conned his way into Brown in one of the great hoaxes of the century. He became a hotel clerk and then the manager of another; and, resisting the family construction business, turned his small, fairly fertile but on the whole uninteresting talent for storytelling into an undistinguished career as a Hollywood hack. Earlier, he'd made the obligatory trip to Paris. There were girls. He caught the clap, more than once. Apparently, he said nothing and did little that anyone could recall vividly a generation after his death, although scores of people who knew him well are very much alive today and unstinting in their generosity to authorized biographers. Martin's failure is almost mysterious.

The fault, in part, I think, is the function of age. In his mid-thirties now, Martin did not directly experience any part of the Depression years; nor, what is more to the point, has he succeeded in *re*-experiencing them. But neither did Peter Gay experience Weimar, of course; and for the sake of perspective, if not immediacy, a modern historian is a more reliable guide to the 13th century than those chroniclers who lived it. That's all very well; but whether it's the 13th century or the 1920's or '30s, the chronicler had better be so finely attuned to the time that he can hear what it does not say. Reading the books, while of course a necessary condition, is not a sufficient one; the latter is more a function of blood chemistry, to put it fancifully. Martin is just not: he's too heavy, straight-laced, ponderous, solemn, humorless, too — well, professorial; the emphases, the stresses and strains, weights and measures, the shadings, the sense of center and periphery — all are either never quite right or simply wrong. If, for example, you're going to use the virtually useless term "liberal" to catch everything left of center, then your sense of the whirling politics of "United Front" and "Popular Front," to cite only two cases from the wild ride of the '30s, isn't going to help you much through those thickets.

And in part it is a failure of tone of voice; of the feel for character, of intuition and imagination; of an instinct for an age's masquerades and jokes; of the delicate sense of what makes the heart beat and the spirit turn—which is to say the failure is disabling, a mismatch of biographer and subject, a case for the divorce courts.

These are grave charges, but they can be documented from every page. Space requires that I limit myself severely; I select examples at random, from several stages of West's life.

West, as an adolescent, went to a summer camp called Camp Paradox. Oo-ha! Martin takes leave of his senses; drives us half-mad with paradox, paradoxness, paradoxicality, paradoxitude. You might think the god of Lit Crit had ordained the union of this poor boy with the camp so named; or that his mother, wanting her boy to become the Master of Paradox in Contemp Lit had bribed the owner to change the name from Camp Tarry-A-While or Well-Met.

Young West did some spoofs—of the camp and its owner — for the camp magazine and a camp show. As if Martin had never heard that such things are done routinely; as if he hadn't begun to suspect that West was a funny, sardonic Jewish boy who no doubt thought that camp was a bum trip though better than the steaming city, and that the owner (whose name was Goldwater—ah, how these things happen to happen!) was a pompous clown—refusing to settle for any part of this, Martin writes: "Paradoxically, he had learned to defend himself against convention by means of art."

Again: when West had faked his way feloniously—bizarrely, hilariously—into Tufts, he matriculated for the B.S. rather than the B.A., for the classical reason that the former didn't require the study of ancient languages. Remember your own degenerate quest for the "easy" courses taught by the "easy" graders? Okay, now you're ready. Mar-

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SAUL MALOFF *is the author of Happy Families (Scribner's).*

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tin observes: "Infused by the spirit of the modern, and in full revolt against the massive past. West saw in the languages of antiquity the summation of all that was most sterile and dead in American life."

When West, Quentin Reynolds and some other literary chaps at Brown who were infused by the spirit wrote a "bawdy, drunken farce" called *The Plastered Duchess* containing such lines as "What ho! the Guard. Bring in some Booze," Martin writes: "For a moment, the spirit of the absurd stalked College Hill."

As a boy, West sometimes spied on people in Central Park, including, once, lovers in the throes. Now there is much that may be said of such a boy, as I have reason to know all too well; but Martin says no part of it when he notes of West as a young man making the Paris scene: "Again, he was content, ambivalently, to be a lonely spy: Paris was the artistic Central Park of his need to see."

To stay in the Psych business for another example. In response to a secretary whose sister had recently died, West commiserated by telling her he knew just how she felt, and his mother would know just how her mother felt, because his brother had run away from home to join the Merchant Marine during World War I and had "drowned in the North Sea." West had no brother, let alone one who drowned in the North or any other Sea. Martin observes: "As this tale suggests, West tended to fantasize in compensation for unsatisfactory reality." One gags on the line; the words simply won't wash down. That is the language of Clinical Psychology 101, which is not to say that it may not contain some small measure of that tiresome order of truth: but that can't be the important truth. Here, though I never set eyes on West and am not familiar with the biographical materials, I must arrogantly insist upon a truer version of the seemingly curious behavior of the author of *Miss Lonelyhearts*, the compassionate, suffering Jew who had a powerful thing about the compassionate, suffering Christ. Let me present the short, revised version. That girl had imparted shocking news; she had told him her sister had died. What was Nathan Weinstein to do with such a heavy burden? How could he possibly repay her loss? The least he could do for this girl was to make a sacrifice, an offering, a piece of himself; and so, from the populous world within him, he drew forth a brother—a real imaginary brother, a nice, wacky, wonderfully gifted, reckless, romantic kid, a greatly admired, nutty older brother, the family clown whom everybody had loved most and who had broken his mother's heart by lying about his age and running away to die in the Great War—and to die (just like him!) by getting washed overboard by the raging sea while manning his battle-station. West himself was too young, fourteen when we entered the War; and later, though he spoke of going to Spain when the Fascists were marching on Madrid, he never went. He offered the girl his brother for her sister. To me anyway, this makes heart's sense.

A few more exampres and I'll go away: examples in the form of a brief anthology without glosses.

The first: "West occupied neither (the ivory tower nor the soap box), nor was he between them; he shared, rather, in the more profound aspects of these extremes and made a paradoxical art out of continued concern both with the highest ideals of art-as-form and also with a willing immersion into the archetypes of human response emerging on the frontiers of consciousness in his time."

The second, on West poised nervously on the threshold of possible marriage and then at the last moment drawing back: ". . . having reached a crisis of self, West was trying to resolve the conflicting demands of his own identity as an artist with those of society and marriage."

The third, on West putting it all together for his first novel: "By the waters of chaos he began to integrate his talent with his ambitions."

The fourth, on West sweating out the reception of *The Day of the Locust* (with a stiff little bow to T.S.E.): "With hopes and fears and mingled memories and desires, he waited for the reviews."

This, this, this of a writer who, having started out after the fashion of the '20s as a literary boy, a Frenchified dandy and *poseur*, a bit of a fop and aesthete, had by the time of his prophetic novels purged his soul of the least taint of crap, so that near and at the end he could no longer, for love or money or promise of heaven, make a false move, an empty gesture. I swear to God I see West the ironist, born Nathan Weinstein, reading such lines and writhing in embarrassment; and then thinking: What the hell, I suppose there are worse things in this world. Life is hard, especially for a Jew, even when he's not Jewish. And then breaking up. Hear him saying to his brother-in-law: Sid. Hey, Sid. Get a load of this, will you.

Ah well. There are some passages of criticism in the book that aren't half-bad; masses of material have been collected; and it's the only biography we have. And if you think, as I do, that West was one of the true originals; one of the few founders; and by any reckoning, one of the handful of first-rate American novelists of our time, then, like it or not, you must read the book.

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THE TREE-TRIMMER

RON SEITZ

so high
he hangs
by a thin rope
swinging back and forth
limb to limb
with a saw
cutting
branch by branch
the tree down

his memory of
the freedom in that
frightening balance
what he will take
with him into
old age

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BOOKS

Hemingway, T. E. Lawrence, O'Connor, Haring, First Novels

Islands in the Stream

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Scribner's, $10

ROBERT EMMET LONG

Since Hemingway's death in 1961, there have been many rumors about a major novel left behind in manuscript; its existence was doubted, then confirmed by Mary Hemingway, and verified in Philip Young's inventory of Hemingway's manuscripts. It has now been published by Scribner's under the title of *Islands in the Stream*. It is a novel of considerable bulk, filling nearly five hundred large pages, and although it is a "major" novel only in volume, it will not fail to delight Hemingway admirers. *Islands in the Stream* has without doubt, and perhaps even as its chief pleasure, the grand Hemingway manner — the sharp, chiseled style that has been one of the most admired and imitated in the world and is what one means when one speaks of American prose fiction as "modern." One is confronted by that style, and all it can do and suggest, in opening paragraphs:

> The house was built on the highest part of the narrow tongue of land between the harbor and the open sea. It had lasted through three hurricanes and it was built solid as a ship. It was shaded by tall coconut palms that were bent by the trade wind and on the ocean side you could walk out of the door and down the bluff across the white sand and into the Gulf Stream. The water of the Stream was usually a dark blue when you looked out at it when there was no wind. But when you walked out into it there was just the green light of the water over that floury white sand and you could see the shadow of any big fish a long time before he could ever come in close to the beach.
>
> It was a safe and fine place to bathe in the day but it was no place to swim at night. At night the sharks came in close to the beach, hunting in the edge of the Stream and from the upper porch of the house on quiet nights you could hear the splashing of the fish they hunted and if you went down to the beach you could see the phosphorescent wakes they made in the water. At night the sharks had no fear and everything else feared them. But in the day they stayed out away from the clear white sand and if they did come in you could see their shaddows a long way away.

The impeccable, painterly style of the opening introduces us to a fictional world where the waters off Cuba (a region treated in *To Have and Have Not* and *The Old Man and the Sea*) become distinctively Hemingway terrain, as Paris, Italy, Spain, and Africa had in his earlier fiction. At the center of the work is a successful painter, Thomas Hudson, who is visited by three sons, children of two earlier marriages which ended in divorce. For Hudson one could substitute Hemingway, since the hero is autobiographical in many ways, and is even referred to as "papa." "Papa" Hudson lives in semi-seclusion on his island in the Gulf Stream; despite masculine companionship, and in a later section the society of Havana whores, Hudson is a lonely and isolated figure who, among many disappointments, has kept intact a discipline which has allowed him to paint well and "truly." In the section called "Bimini," the first of three major divisions of the novel, Hudson is contrasted with a friend, Roger Davis, who has destroyed his discipline as a writer, although he has preserved a physical integrity which, in one of the best described scenes of the novel, enables him to bring down and "ruin" with his fists an ugly-mannered and very loud American millionaire. For the most part, however, "Bimini" is concerned with Hudson's relations with his sons. One of the sons loses a four-hour duel with a thousand-pound fish, and the physical details of this struggle are meticulously recorded. But the scene seems too drawn out, and the boys themselves never become quite real. One of the boys is compared to an otter, and that is about as close as Hemingway comes to giving a living sense of them. They all talk in a stylized speech, and in Hemingway's syntax. They ask their father about his early days in Paris, and this occasions a great deal of reminiscence, some of it quite charming and humorous, as when the oldest boy, Tom, Jr., recalls his meetings with James Joyce. But it is essentially memoire writing, and appears to have been written for its own sake, as if Hemingway had forgotten he was writing a novel.

By the end of this section, their vacation with their father over, the boys leave for Europe; not long after, a telegram is received informing Hudson of the death of the two younger boys with their mother in an automobile accident near Biarritz. Near the opening of the second section, "Cuba," some years having passed, we learn of the death of the oldest boy, then a pilot with the RAF. More than ever, Hudson is alone, the loss of his sons a sorrow from which he will never recover. "He thought," Hemingway remarks, "that on the ship he could come to some terms with his sorrow, not knowing, yet, that there are no terms to be made with sorrow. It can be cured by death and it can be blunted or anesthetized

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by various things. Time is supposed to cure it, too. But if it is cured by anything less than death, the chances are that it was not true sorrow." Early in World War II now, Hudson lives alone in his villa, with a few servants and a tribe of cats, making occasional excursions to the Floridita bar in Havana. At the Floridita, he talks with characters like Willie and Ignacio Natera Revello and a prostitute past her first youth named Honest Lil. There is a great deal of what one might call "man talk" at the Floridita, rough four-letter words delivered in a clipped, sardonic style; there is also quite a bit of humor, especially in Hudson's conversation with Honest Lil; but most of all, there is a remembrance of affairs past—Hudson's wives and lovers and casual sexual encounters, particularly three beautiful young Chinese girls he slept with at once, an account of which shocks the sensibilities of Honest Lil. In the final section, Hudson heads an expedition to scout for German seamen, held up somewhere in the islands after the sinking of their craft. When contact is made, a battle ensues and by the end of the novel Hudson lies dying of bullet wounds. In some ways, *Islands in the Stream* seems designed as a more cosmopolitan version of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Each of the protagonists is dedicated to his craft, suffers and endures defeat. Yet because *Islands in the Stream* is overwhelmed by retrospection and obsessed by death, it gives the impression of a subconscious death wish.

Islands in the Stream is a formless and sprawling work which dispenses with the usual structure and architecture of the novel; its three major sections are really vignettes extended to hundreds of pages. It is as if Hemingway, at the end of his career, had come full cycle from the dramatic conciseness of the short stories in the early 1920s which brought him world-wide attention at an early age. Yet the economy and understatement of the short scene is Hemingway's real strength, and despite brilliant passages in *Islands in the Stream* (passages almost detachable from the novel), the work as a whole suffers from a looseness that suggests a slackness in conception. Some of the characters are weakly created: the Hudson sons seem unreal as people, and when they are rather too neatly killed off, the great sorrow imputed to Hudson seems unreal too. Other characters drift in and out of the novel without explanation. The men on board Hudson's ship at the end have names like Antonio and Gil and Ara, but they are all faceless and interchangeable with one another. Most of all, Hemingway drifts off at times into lengthy memoire-like recollections which not only do not move the novel along, but give the impression of an imperfect fusion of literary forms. The only thing that really is "happening" in *Islands in the Stream* is style, style as an end and pleasure in itself and related weakly, if at all, to a compelling human drama. It is as if, in *Islands in the Stream*, Hemingway's art had survived intact and failed only of a subject.

The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia

PHILLIP KNIGHTLY &
COLIN SIMPSON
McGraw-Hill, $8.95

JEFFREY MEYERS

British eccentrics have always been attracted to Arabia, from the days of Gordon, Doughty and Burton to Philby, Glubb and Thesiger. T. E. Lawrence belongs directly in this tradition, and it is precisely his eccentricity—and his genius—that his present biographers have failed to understand. The laborious book of these London *Times* reporters began when John Bruce sold them the startling story that he had regularly administered beatings to Lawrence, at the latter's request, between 1923 and 1934. Lawrence concocted a highly improbable tale (which Bruce *still* believes) about his old uncle's insistence that Lawrence be physically punished, and he persuaded the young and bewildered Bruce to serve as flagellator. The rest of the book develops around this core, which is the only secret life of Lawrence. Even this secret had been hinted at as early as 1937 when Lawrence's youngest brother spoke cryptically of "his subjection of the body (that) was achieved by methods advocated by the saints whose lives he had read."

Having "got something" on Lawrence, the authors persevere in the tradition of the news-hungry publicity men who plagued Lawrence all his life: who drove him out of the R.A.F., who caused his recall from India, who hounded him in his retirement and threw stones at Clouds Hill to bring him into the open. Not yet do "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest." The authors have slight sympathy and compassion and little comprehension of the agonist who escaped into the R.A.F. as a kind of lay monasticism and who spoke of the horror of "slow physical corruption, a piecemeal rotting of the envelope of flesh about the hopeless spirit longing to escape." Though not as peevish as Aldington's shrill denigration, they tend in that direction and write that Geoffrey Dawson "*contrived* to have Lawrence elected a Fellow of All Souls" (was he not worthy of the fellowship?) and that Lawrence had "a high-pitched voice, a beardless chin, and an embarrassed giggle" (which is not true).

Having made one discovery, the authors proclaim other "new" findings based on unpublished material, and then merely repeat what is already published and well-known. They insist that *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* "must not be taken as history" though Lawrence says in his Author's Note: "Please take it as a personal narrative pieced out of memory."

They claim to have discovered in Israel "a record of a vital meeting" between Feisal and Chaim Weizmann that proved Lawrence was working for "an Arab state in Syria, under British protection, financed and advised by

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Zionists!" But as long ago as 1957, St. John Philby wrote, "it was undoubtedly Lawrence who made Feisal qualify for this prize (the throne of Iraq) by arranging the understanding with Dr. Weizmann regarding the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine."

They also reveal that Lawrence's main role in the Arab Revolt was as a political officer attached to Feisal "with the object of influencing him and so ensuring the success of British policy." This again is well-known and openly admitted by Lawrence, as their quote from chapter 48 of *Seven Pillars* makes clear. *Und so weiter.*

When the authors do not state the obvious they are often incorrect: about Lawrence as a spy, about his "betrayal" of the Arabs, and about his torture at Deraa. Their greatest gaffe is the bald assertion that Lawrence was trained as a spy in his prewar archeological years by his fatherly friend David Hogarth. They insist on calling this the "Great Game" though the reference to Kipling is both inept and misleading and suggests their limited conception of intelligence work. Their star witness, one Charles Boutagy, claims that on Lawrence's orders "He travelled round the Eastern Mediterranean on Italian ships listening to gossip and making discreet inquiries" (Jane Austen as *agent provocateur*). They find it significant that Lawrence had a telephoto lens on his antiquated camera at Carchemish, though he had been a fine photographer since boyhood and both his *Home Letters* and *Oriental Assembly* contain scores of photos of crusaders' castles and archeological sites. They quote Captain Newcombe's emphatic assertion that it would be ridiculous to think Lawrence and his companion Woolley were "secretly working for Military Intelligence" before January 1914 when they mapped the Sinai Peninsula on Kitchener's orders, and then they dismiss the statement of Newcombe (who surely would have known) as not correct.

It is highly ironic, therefore, that the authors never mention the espionage

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work that Lawrence did while on Colonel Clayton's staff in Cairo from 1914 to 1916. During those years, as he told his biographers Graves and Liddell-Hart, he visited the Senussi desert (Malraux's *Walnut Trees of Altenburg* is a fictional portrayal of Lawrence's exploits there) and contacted the Levant group of the British Secret Service in Athens. The authors are amazed that the young and unknown Lawrence was ordered to negotiate with the Turks for the besieged garrison under General Townshend at Kut, though he explained to Liddell-Hart that "I had put the Grand Duke Nicholas in touch with certain disaffected Arab officers in Erzerum (which was later captured by the Russians). Did it through the War Office and our Military Attache in Russia. So the War Office thought I could do the same thing over Mespot., and accordingly wired out to Clayton."

The most serious of their errors are the combined charges that "Lawrence did not care for the Arabs" (the whole of *Seven Pillars* weighs against this); that Lawrence was involved in "torturous double dealing and deceit" (Lawrence wrote of the secret Sykes-Picot treaty in chapter 101, "Fortunately, I had early betrayed the treaty's existence to Feisal"); that the aims of Lawrence and Feisal were "incompatible and could only result in disaster"; that "politically Britain did not take the Arabs or her promises to them seriously" (their book is as pro-Arab and anti-British as Suleiman Mousa's); and that Lawrence was not, as he claimed, "quit of the wartime Eastern adventures, with clean hands."

In November 1918, the very month after he took Damascus, Lawrence put forth the claims of the Arabs to the British Cabinet in a secret report, "The Reconstruction of Arabia." He refused his British war decorations in an interview with King George V in December, 1918, and was Feisal's principal adviser at the Versailles Conference where they presented the Arab aims in February 1919. With no official power and dubious standing, he was able to make a great impression on all the leaders simply by the force of his personality. Though the French defeated Arab claims to Syria, Feisal remained til July 1920. Meanwhile, Lawrence mounted an intense propaganda campaign and published nine influential articles, mainly in *The Times*, between September 1919 and August 1920. In 1921 he was appointed by Winston Churchill to the Colonial Office as an adviser on Arab affairs. It was his idea to establish the Hashemite dynasty as rulers of the Arab world and he was primarily responsible for placing Feisal on the throne of Iraq and Abdullah on that of Transjordan. As Elizabeth Monroe, an authority cited by the authors, writes of the decisions at the 1921 Cairo Conference: "Lawrence was not their only begetter, but he used his credit and renown to set the ball rolling in a way that paid dividends both to Britain and the Arabs—perhaps the greatest of the several great services he performed in the Middle East." Therefore, Lawrence was perfectly justified when he stated, I "must put on record my conviction that England is out of the Arab affair with clean hands . . . I showed them my wounds (over sixty I have, each scar evidence of a pain incurred in Arab service) as proof I had worked sincerely on their side."

The third major error concerns their account of what happened to Lawrence at Deraa. The authors quote Lawrence's report to Cairo headquarters dated 1919 (!) in which he states he "was caught, and identified by Hajim Bey, the governor, by virtue of Abd el Kadir's description of me." (This report, cited as "Privately owned," is entirely characteristic of their scanty and cavalier documentation.) On the basis of this report they maintain the Bey knew his prisoner was Lawrence, forced Lawrence to submit to him, then allowed him to escape and suppressed the news of his capture.

In Lawrence's holograph summaries for the Deraa chapter in the Oxford 1922 edition in the Houghton Library, he twice states that the Bey "has no

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suspicion of his identity" and does "not suspect Lawrence is other than he appears." Thus, the Bey's statement, "I know all about you," cannot mean he recognizes Lawrence but rather that he knows Lawrence is not what he pretends to be (an ordinary Circassian) and realizes that Lawrence (like himself) is a sadomasochist and perhaps a latent or active homosexual. Apart from the documentary evidence, this interpretation is more logically convincing. At that time there was a large reward on Lawrence's head, and all the enemy leaders—General Djemal Pasha, General Limon von Sanders, Colonel Kress von Kressenstein — later wrote that Lawrence's campaigns against them were extremely effective. If the Bey knew Lawrence, he would never have allowed him to escape. If Lawrence knew Abd el Kader had betrayed him at Deraa, he would have shot him when he deposed the Algerian traitor in Damascus. As revenge for his torture at Deraa, Lawrence ordered the Arabs to take no prisoners when they fought the Deraa police battalion at Tafas.

The authors' psychological analysis of this most central event in Lawrence's life, which is of course closely related to his later beatings by Bruce, is extremely superficial. They have tracked down the Bey (who died in 1965) and discovered that he was an active heterosexual. This, for them, casts doubt on Lawrence's story, though it is entirely possible that the Bey was *both* hetero and homosexual. They discuss Lawrence's masochism and quote from *The Mint* to show his awareness of the relation between pain and sexuality (who is unaware of this?), but this quotation describes sadistic, not masochistic, pleasure. They assert that Bruce's beatings expiated Lawrence's guilt feelings "about Dahoum's death," though they present no evidence to show that Lawrence felt *guilty* (i.e. somehow responsible), though he was surely grieved. Their summary of Lawrence's psychological state when he entered the R.A.F. in 1922 is the following: "The clinical (sic) picture of Lawrence at this time is that of a man suffering from depressive illness." Finally, A. W. Lawrence (in *The Times* of 22 November 1969) has convincingly refuted their repetition of Bruce's claim that Lawrence attempted suicide in 1925.

Though the reasons for Lawrence's scourging are complex and obscure, it is likely that the series of beatings exemplify the kind of "repetition-compulsion" which Freud discussed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and related to the death instinct. The whippings are a reenactment of Lawrence's terrible traumatic guilt, and allow him to redeem his eternal and existential debt by enduring what had once crushed his body and spirit, and to displace the death instinct by punishing himself instead of destroying himself.

The authors are also confused about another point that was clarified some time ago. They quote the chapter on Deraa in which Lawrence says after his flogging, "Five years ago, a timid recruit at Khalfati, something, less staining, of the sort had happened,"

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and they add, "It is impossible to say what Lawrence meant by this." Yet as long ago as 1938 David Garnett explained that this refers to the time in Syria in 1909 when Lawrence "was attacked by Kurds who beat him and left him for dead."

There are several other significant aspects of Lawrence's life that the authors (who have had the benefit of the world-wide research facilities of *The Times*), have failed to clarify or even to mention. They discuss Lawrence's brief enlistment as a private soldier when he ran away from home at 17, but do not explain the reason (they are probably right in saying "it was *not* his illegitimacy that caused the tensions that existed in his family"). They fail to identify the "Mr. Murray" at whose flat Bruce claims to have first met Lawrence, and do not even mention Bruce's article on Lawrence in 1938.

More importantly, they say that Lawrence's friendship with the airman whom he "called either 'Poppet' or 'Rabbit' " (this is probably R. A. Guy, though they do not name him) was disturbing to his commanding officer, and then drop the subject completely. There are several strangely intimate unpublished letters to Poppet-Rabbit in the Houghton Library and it would certainly be fascinating to know more about Lawrence's relationship with the beautiful, young man to whom he wrote warmly on September 17, 1923: "My pleasure in the R.A.F. was partly, largely, due to the pleasure I got from your blue and yellow self: and I owe you a deep debt for many happy times."

Though the authors have interviewed several obscure people very remotely connected to Lawrence (a distant relative of his father's first wife who tells a very improbable tale of Lawrence's mother trying to impersonate her employer, and Tom Beaumont who says that life in the desert was rough), they have not interviewed any of the Arab leaders who fought with Lawrence. Admittedly, most of them came to a bad end: Auda is dead, Husein and his son Ali were driven out of the Hejaz by Ibn Saud and died in exile, Feisal died in 1933 (his son Ghazi was killed in an auto accident and grandson Feisal II was murdered), Jaafar Pasha, later Prime Minister of Iraq, was murdered in 1936, Abdullah was assassinated in 1951. Shades of the House of Atreus! Still, Zeid is alive and there must be others as well.

In fairness, I should add that the authors and their researchers have turned up some information about Lawrence in the Public Records Office and private collections, and have written solid chapters on certain aspects of Lawrence's life: his negotiations at Kut, the identity of S.A. (which confirms the traditional theory about Sheik Ahmed, whom they call Salim Ahmed), Lawrence's recall from India, his relation to Charlotte Shaw (there's a good chapter on this in Janet Dunbar's book), and the details of his death (which are essentially the same as *The Times*' story of May, 1935, except that the authors state Thomas Hardy, who died in 1928, attended Lawrence's funeral). They also show that Lawrence had a great deal of political influence in the years just after the War (though they do not seem to see that he wielded this for the Arabs' cause), and that he used the remnants of this power to make salutary reforms in the R.A.F.

They frequently debunk the legend (which nobobdy believes anyway) of "the white Arab, Prince of Mecca, and uncrowned King of Damascus," but never really go beyond legend to reveal a substantial, living Lawrence. This is because they concentrate on the more sensational aspects of his career and completely ignore his humane and artistic side. They do not discuss *Seven Pillars* and barely mention any other of his considerable works (he was a great letter writer), nor do they consider his many close friendships with literary figures: E. M. Forster (who thought his great quality was compassion), Shaw, Thomas Hardy, Robert Graves.

And Lawrence's influence, in war, politics and also literature, is totally ignored. He has been the subject of two book-length poems by Altounyan and Rodman, and shorter poems by Auden, Graves and MacLeish; a model for Shaw's Private Meek and Saint Joan, for Auden and Isherwood's Ransom, for Rattigan's *Ross*. Bolt has written a screenplay about the Arab Revolt, Forster (obliquely) a story about him, and his life has inspired novels by Malraux, Buchan, Williamson, Forestier, Spens and Aldridge. The aspects of Lawrence's complex and intriguing character that have had an extraordinary appeal to creative writers will have to be understood by his definitive biographer. Until that biography is written, the best book on Lawrence remains *T. E. Lawrence By His Friends.*

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Correction

To the Editors: My Oct. 9 review of Paul Horgan's book contained a ghastly misprint. Page 53, column 2, three lines from bottom reads: "But his courage is not less than its compassion: one is cheated . . ." Of course it should read *no one* is cheated . . ANNE FREMANTLE

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Linda Kuehl on First Novels

The Threat of Originality

Many fiction editors have "kulchur" fantasies of finding "promising" talent which they can mold into greatness. Pragmatically, though, they encourage dependably "productive" writers to become fixtures on their spring and fall lists insuring their house profits from paperback and film rights. New writers who threaten them with originality usually fall by the wayside. As Maxwell Perkins remarked in a letter 26 years ago, "I think the percentage of the very good books—the really notable books—that are declined is higher than the percentage of the highly competent mediocrities. The reason is that the books of the greatest talent are almost always full of trouble, and difficult, and they do not conform to the usual standards."

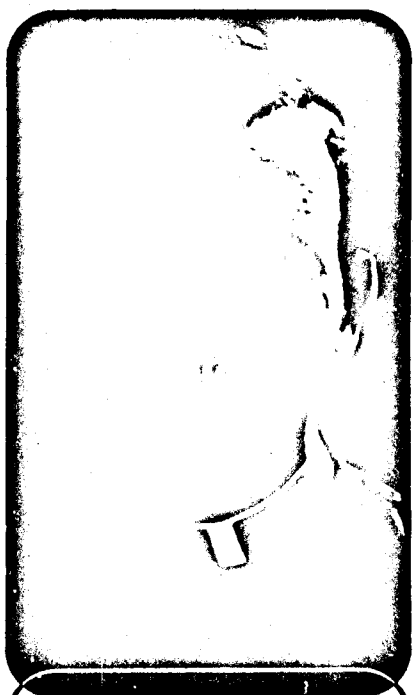
If a few "difficult" books do get into print, they're usually abandoned after pub date. Lacking that commercial *je ne sais quoi* of a schmaltzy bagatelle like this year's *Love Story*, they make poor investments. The rationale runs something like this: publish the Erich Segals in order to be able to afford taking losses with more serious works. Yet no wonder the serious works lose money when the mediocrities get the advertising, promotion and a conditioned audience.

Of course there are exceptional publishing houses like Knopf, Farrar, Straus, and Houghton Mifflin which take fiction seriously, as well as some exceptional editors there and elsewhere who know what to do with difficult originals. More importantly, there are writers who can't care less about what's "in" or what's "out" or which season is fortuitous for the appearance of their latest offering, but who simply write what they have to write the best way they know how.

Among these is Joanna Ostrow, whose imaginative power triumphs in *In the Highlands Since Time Immemorial* (Knopf, $5.95). Because of her subtlety and implicitness, the book resists definition. One can try to pin it down as a narrative about the deteriorating crofts of the Scottish central highlands, the primitive Gaelic peasantry that communicates through an ancient language, arcane humor, and tactful, articulate silences, and two unnerved Edinburgh students who come into their baffling midst. Simon—born of a Belfast whore and black sailor—returns to the croft where he was reared by Callum and Mary MacDonald because this is the only vital place he's ever known — "the still center to things." His wife, however, feels threatened by its inexplicability, and their children stop talking. Their friend, Michael, goes there to research his thesis on highland superstitions, but really "to find some wild and hopeless country" in which his two salukis can "run loose" and where he can "get some peace for himself out of that running." He too finds the place ineffable.

Miss Ostrow creates singular personalities. Like them, she reveres primeval mystery, yet conjures up the Celtic twilight without being mystifying or sentimental. Poetic, yes, but always concrete. And her scenes are indeed memorable, for instance, the Coursing Meet where the salukis chase the hare, and the sedate celebration afterwards at the Laird's ball; the time Michael first meets his soulmates, Simon and Jenny, in their Edinburgh flat, or the times Simon and Michael each stand before Callum MacDonald as if before a strange god. If Miss Ostrow intends to show modern complexity in contrast to primordial enigmas, she does so through utterly unique settings and characters, and a genuine inventiveness.

Cecil Brown, who published his first novel earlier this year, is cynical about the book business. In *The Life and Loves of Mr. Jiveass Nigger* (Farrar, Strauss, $5.50), his first person narrator says that "publishers are interested in selling books and if you say some-



FATHER JIM CARROLL, who earlier gave us *Tender of Wishes*, has now written a book of original fairy tales that can be used for meditations or in liturgies. It's called *Wonder and Worship*. These stories are for people of all ages, for anyone who has ever dared to dream, or even stand in silence before the magic of human life. "Fairy tales," says the author, "are not mere allegories or stories with moral lessons. What is important about a tale is the experience of exploring a strange land that may, after all, be home... A fairy tale invites us into the fantastic world of awesome fear, trembling, wonder, fascination, joy, dread and love."

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thing about sex and being a nigger then you got a bestseller." Right now, black seems to be the going thing, just as Jewish was a decade ago. Editors want stuff in the Southern up-from-slavery and Northern struggle-within-the-ghetto categories. Al Young's brief novel, *Snakes* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, $4.95), appears to be one of the better seemingly autobiographical black *bildungsromans*, distinguished from the others by a sustained musical flow as if he had written lyrics to some mellow blues tune he was hearing in his head.

But Cecil Brown is happily in his own class. His picaresque George Washington, alias Paul Winthrop, Jr., alias Julius Makewell, chugs through Copenhagen on a blonde-hair-green-eye ovarian trolley, hitting Miss Ann for money and boasting to fellow expatriates in the hole-in-the-wall cafe called the Drop Inn while his put-ons always backfire. Behind the pseudonyms and bravado lives an honest, naive, vulnerable, romantic, super-moral, 100 percent American Soul Brother whose "bad ass" image is so much protective self-deception. Eventually George realizes he's been kidding himself and so decides to quit the exile scene and depart for "Charlie country" where he will play the game in command of the rules. Though the author's conventional structure restricts him from swinging all the way with this free-wheeling cat, his incorrigible humor and eloquent jive make the book a ball.

Two first novels, well received but disappointing to me, are Dan Wakefield's *Going All the Way* (Delacorte, $6.95) and Carol Hill's *Jeremiah 8:20* (Random, $6.95). Wakefield nostalgically pictures the lonely-crowd generation of Ike, the McCarthy hearings, and GI's returning from Korea, but in a manner unfortunately as colorless and naive as the era itself. This '50s version of *The Graduate* is too heavy on lingo like "jail-bait," "Big Rod," and "jock" and too light on the creativity needed to illuminate the drabness. A first-rate journalist by profession, the author does not yet show himself able to transform the who, what, where, how and why of reporting into the novelistic form.

Carol Hill's misfortune concerns focus. She creates that familiar introverted Herzog type in the guise of Irish Catholic "fat, balding and 39" Jeremiah Francis Scanlon, but she never really develops his compulsion to tape record overheard conversations of blacks in Harlem. Rather, she shifts back and forth among his boarding-house mates whose discussions about existential authenticity and anti-war politics are not intellectually clever enough to provide effective *tour de force*. Their incessant conversations digress from Scanlon's sexual-black phobia which should hold the author's attention. Being as intelligent as she obviously is, Mrs. Hill might have written a significant book had she trusted the particular—in this case, Jeremiah's absurd obsession—and not attempted a comprehensive statement about Today.

Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship author, Edward Hannibal, appears to write top-grade bestseller fiction—lightweight and facile but accomplished and entertaining. His story about the dilemma of an ad man is not exactly new, but his refreshing prose lifts it above the commonplace. *Chocolate Days, Popsicle Weeks* (Houghton Mifflin, $6.95) depicts John Fitzpatrick's ascent from humble Boston Irish Catholic beginnings to the vice presidency of a blue chip agency at age thirty. The title refers to the ice cream plant where Fitzie worked to put himself through college and to his child-like illusion that making the big time will be one big popsicle in the sky.

When the bubble bursts into a "dumb little life" of alcohol, wheeler-dealer glibness, suburban idiocy and marriage-on-the-rocks, Fitzie wants out. Nobly but ingenuously he resolves to make more babies and less money, saved by a profound aversion to adultery and an apparent religious conscience. How he will survive one never knows. Just how his updated religiousity pulls him through one also doesn't know. Has he overcome that *"guiltguiltguiltguilt"*? Has he denied the nun who whispers "Catholic-Puritan bullshit" in his ear? Or has he not capitulated to the very Puritan ethic he says he deplores? These crucial issues and others notwithstanding, Hannibal still convinces you that Fitzie is deeper and more spirited than the gimmick man he pretends to be, and you, the reader, wish him well.

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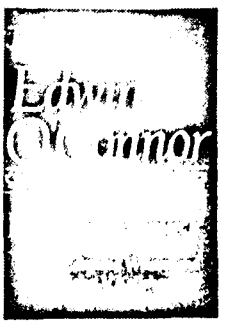

This handsome memorial compendium of the late Edwin O'Connor's work contains selections from his well-known novels, his lesser fiction, and three splendid nostalgic essays on O'Connor by his friends Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Edmund Wilson and John V. Kelleher. The essays alone make the book worth buying, even by those already familiar with most of O'Connor's published prose. But it is the two previously unpublished fragments of books he did not live to complete that should most arouse the reader's curiosity.

The "Boy" fragment, at the very end of the book, is 40 pages of the novel that O'Connor was writing when he was stricken by a cerebral hemorrhage in his apartment in Boston in 1968. It is a charming account of a boy growing up in a small, ugly mill city of New England; his friends at the *Atlantic Monthly Press* felt that in finished form it might have become his best book. The much shorter, and less polished, 16-page fragment of his "Cardinal" novel, however, seemed to me more ambitious of its intent and therefore more interesting for its unconsummated purpose.

The "Cardinal" of O'Connor's fragment is an eighty-year-old prelate, presumably of a New England see, staring death in the face. O'Connor's opening shafts are exceedingly veracious and well-aimed, not at the Cardinal himself, but at the insipid city newspapers which have thrived by nominating him every morning for sainthood. "At first he had been baffled and even appalled by the endless succession of flabby improbable stories, so fawning and cosy in their tone, so totally unreal in their substance; now, however, he read them exactly as he would have read legends, the central figure of which —the benign hometown patriarch, majestic yet folksy, forever beaming at freshly baptized pickaninnies, or waving at departing pilgrims, or leading three hundred lumberjacks in the recitation of the rosary—was in some way vaguely familiar to him but was no one he had ever met."

The Cardinal is celebrating the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. He ruminates during the visit of an uproarious, slightly batty priest called Charlie Crimmins —the kind of character we are so accustomed to in O'Connor and which, had he lived to be eighty himself, he would never have ceased to conjure up —about the "silent, isolating, depthless and overwhelming" sadness of his own declining days, a "peculiar sadness rolling in fast like one of the great coastal fogs." He meditates as well on the confused laity—who are no more confused than the Cardinal himself—on the unsettled older priests and the rebellious younger ones, of the changing contemporary Church. Soon afterwards, the Cardinal is examined by his doctor, a cancerous node is discovered on his neck, and he is told he is going to die.

On the threshold of death the Cardinal, wondering like everyone else whether most of the lifelong devotional practices he had been raised on could now be considered worthless, and doubting even the value of his administrative legacy, contemplates the question of his successor. The likeliest of the candidates is a Bishop Degnan, from the adjoining diocese, a tightrope walker who, in "these years of Revolution in the Church . . . was at one moment claimed by the liberals, at the next by the conservatives; there were even those moments when, after a more-than-usually elliptical address, he was claimed by both at once." The Cardinal had only one reservation about Bishop Degnan: "he thought he was a boob."

There the fragment ends. In his Introduction, Professor Kelleher explains

(Continued on page 109)

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Recent and (Alas) Neglected

No one is so aware of the arbitrary aspects of book reviewing as book editors—and, of course, authors. To assuage editorial guilt and authorial pain, we have asked several critics to suggest recent Books Which Went Unnoticed But Shouldn't Have.

Leonard Kriegel

A book I recently reviewed for the new magazine, *Modern Occasions*, Thomas Berger's *Vital Parts* (Harper & Row, $6.95), seems to me superior to most of what is called "black humor." And Werner Keller's *Diaspora* (Harcourt, Brace, $10) seems to me a much-needed antidote—simply as a historical review—for some intellectuals on the American Left, in whose mouths the word "Zionist" is beginning to sound increasingly like the Stalinist "Cosmopolitan." And, finally, I would say that Ernst Fischer's *Art Against Ideology* (Braziller, $6.95) is one of the better works of contemporary Marxist literary criticism.

Martin E. Marty

James F. Findlay, Jr.'s *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (U. of Chicago Press, $10) and Ernest R. Sandeen's *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (U. of Chicago Press, $12). Neither book is by a best friend or cousin. Conflict of interest is apparent: they are from the University of Chicago Press and I am from the University of Chicago. Conflict of interest is ambiguous: I met one author only once and almost never see the other. No relatives. Conflict of interest is abolished: I have no fiscal interest in either book.

How do I know they Went Unnoticed But Shouldn't Have? 1) They are historical. 2) They are religious. 3) They are Protestant. 4) They deal with Fundamentalism (the first, pre-). Four ways to be big losers these days. Books about Fundamentalism sell if they are by Fundamentalists and are not scholarly, but these are exceptions; for twice, scholars have paid attention.

Qualities of both books: good, easy-reading, serious history. Expensive books that won't get thrown away.

Reasons for urgency: they are about pre-millennialism, about which no one knows but by which we are all being shaped. Pre-millennialism: big-bang theory. Pessimistic about now; everything will go wrong. Don't try hard. Optimistic about then: everything will come out all right. Working theology of President Nixon's chaplain; basis of the Civil Religion of the 1970s. You would never have known had we not told you.

John Simon

In 1968, Harper & Row published a new translation in one volume of Henry de Montherlant's *Les jeunes Filles* (*The Girls*, $8.95). It remains the French poet-playwright-essayist-novelist's most spectacular work, a tetralogy whose four volumes originally appeared between 1936 and 1939. Not only is it one of the great imaginative treatments of the battle of the sexes, from the point of view of a novelist-hero as misogynous as he is unable to do without women, it is also an incisive account of one of the last stages of cosmopolitan male supremacy: Paris in the thirties. Pierre Costals, the writer and amorist, is the final flowering of the Byronic hero: self-centered, cynical, ruthless, charming, irresistible to women, he is revealed in his odiousness as well as his splendor, and his sarcastic aphorisms occupy a precarious ledge between irrefutable truth and sheer swinishness. He is a major character of modern literature, even if history never again permits the likes of him to rise above the rank of supernumeraries. And the women around him are scarcely less

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representative and memorable. Unfortunately, this fine new translation of *The Girls* by Terence Kilmartin was farmed out, by *The New York Times Book Review*, to an obscure novelist and even dimmer reviewer, who took an outraged Women's-Lib position in her obtuse and hysterical pan, and an important work was sinisterly ambushed on its way to the readers.

Wilfrid Sheed

Harry Crews' *This Thing Don't Lead to Heaven* (Morrow, $5.95). Because it's good, that's what. No one writes about midgets the way Crews writes about midgets.

Garry Wills

Just two, of many:

The Ideal of the University, by Robert Paul Wolff (Beacon, $5.95), because (like everything by Wolff) it is brilliant—though it did not get enough attention in the spate of books on campus turmoil. Wolff is trapped, with most sane academicians, between the insanities of the liberals on one side and the radicals on the other; and a system that maroons its best men in that No-Man's-Land is in dire dire trouble.

Did You Ever See a Dream Walking? edited by William F. Buckley, Jr. (Bobbs-Merrill, $8.95). I have several reasons, selfish and otherwise, for recommending this anthology of conservative essays—1) because the first essay is by me, 2) because other essays are by Willmoore Kendall and Hugh Kenner, 3) because Buckley had three anthologies out this year, and the first two got most attention, though 4) this one shows more about the *context* of his thought than some books made up exclusively of his own writings, and 5) the Latin dedication to his son echoes Augustine's moving words about Adeodatus, though 6) the inscription in *my* copy says "To remind you of the company you used to keep." It is good company, and I still keep it when I can.

(*Continued from page* 107)

that a month or so before his death, O'Connor set it aside to work on the other story about the boy, adding "I think that the Cardinal novel might have been difficult for him to resume because of the acceleration of radical change within the Church . . . To describe the constantly evolving debate and the hurrying cast of debaters and yet keep the description from fading would have been quite a problem." And yet, Professor Kelleher believes that O'Connor would somehow have solved it, crafting the new, swifter, more nervous style of the fragment into a compelling portrait, the more valuable for O'Connor's concern with the common and quotidian.

What a pity that O'Connor committed so little of his prototypical Cardinal to paper, and that he did not live to persevere. One senses that it would have been not only an important book, but a necessary one. For this prototypical Cardinal exists, somewhere on earth or in space and time or all of these together, and whether he is assembled partly from the fragments of real life or partly or mostly from the caprices of an artist's imagination, does not matter in the end. The Cardinal exists, and we are still in need of an honest, full-length, full-blooded portrait of him. Is it too much to hope that some other novelist of talent will step forward soon enough to express his own consummated vision of this elusive patriarch?

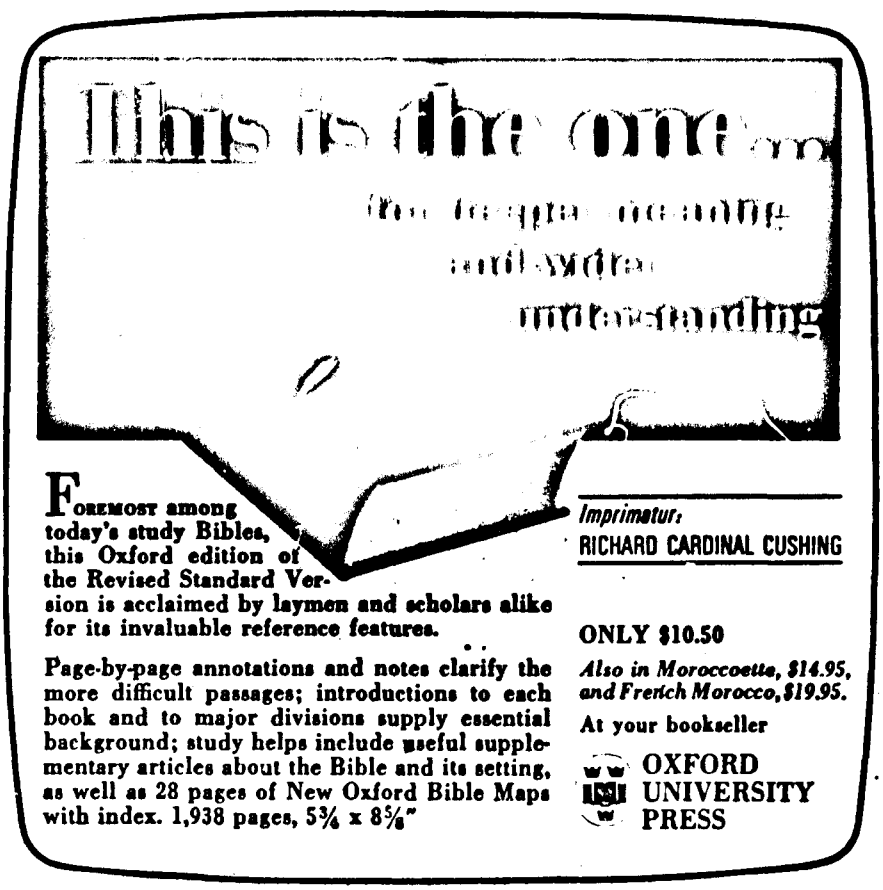
A Theology of Protest

BERNARD HÄRING

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $5.95

DANIEL C. MAGUIRE

This book is a sadness. The subject is so powerful. The author, so capable. The achievement, so wan. All the children of the *aggiornamento* bear a deep debt to the prophetic influence of Bernard Häring. In a mood of grateful remembrance, one might almost forgive him for the weakness of this book. But, grateful remembrance also yields



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expectations, and expectations are disappointed in this slight volume.

Whatever moments of interest the book provides, it usually does not progress beyond the nominative case of the large issues mentioned. Homilies are offered where analyses and probes are needed. The style is anecdotal, rambling, and repetitious.

The book is all the more frustrating because the author, with his fine instincts, lights briefly upon so many of the right issues. He talks about "the precious energies" being released in the variegated but often related protests in church and state. He touches on non-violence and on revolution, on the patterns of domination so deeply noted in our social processes. He confesses the meaningfulness of the Christian ethic for *homo politicus*.

There is talk of conscience "as a secular expression for salvation," of the abstract use of principles by some revolutionaries, of the dogmatic moralizings of both protesters and authorities, of feminism and the role of the establishment. All the star issues are trotted out for a bow.

Some good points are made with force. He argues that non-violence is at least as important as the indissolubility of marriage, and yet exceptions to the ideal of non-violence are granted so facilely. He also warns against the dangerous romance of revolutionaries who dignify their use of violence in the name of the Kingdom of God. Violence is a heady enough wine without adding a dose of religious justification.

He stresses too the danger of I-Thou islands developing in the impersonal atmosphere of mass modern society. The chilly relationships of the socio-economic sphere can drive a person to seek warm relationships almost exclusively in friendships, marriage, and the family. The result can be a dulling of social conscience as a person's interests and commitments are almost totally confined to intimate-group life.

And then there is polygamy. (This is treated in the chapter on the missions.) Häring is sympathetic to the desire of the missionaries not to insist on instant monogamy in cultures where polygamy is culturally and economically deeply rooted. Must a man who desires baptism renounce his honor with the members of his tribe and drive the mother of his children into destitution and prostitution in the name of the Gospel?

There are, however, some large presumptions that roam untested through the pages of this work. The relevance of Christianity and the Sermon on the Mount to corporate and international politics is not self-evident or universally accepted. Hard-nosed political theorists resent any religious or moral intrusion into the nuts and bolts of their calculations. The realism-idealism debate in Christian ethics, which has strained to discern the mode of impact of Christian morality on policy, is not sufficiently noticed in this book. It is not helpful to say quite simply that "Christianity means revolution" and that Christ is "the prototype of all non-violence" unless one shows convincingly that the Christian experience can be

A True Revolutionary

IT IS NOT the task of the Christian leader to go around nervously trying to redeem people, to save them at the last minute, to put them on the right track. Man is redeemed, once and for all. The call of the Christian leader is to help man to affirm this great news, and to make visible in the daily events, the fact that behind the dirty curtain of his painful symptoms there is something great to be seen: The face of Him in Whose image he is shaped. In this way the contemplative can be a leader for a convulsive generation because he can break through the vicious circle of immediate needs asking for immediate satisfaction and can direct the eyes of those who want to look at what is beyond their impulses and lead their erratic energy into creative channels.

Here we see that the future Christian leader in no way can be considered as a man who is just concerned about individuals asking help in adapting themselves to their demanding world. In fact, the Christian leader who is able to be a critical contemplative will be a revolutionary in the most real sense. Because by testing all he sees, hears and touches on their evangelical authenticity, he is the man who is able to change the course of history and lead his people away from the panic-stricken convulsions to the creative action which will make for a better world.

He does not pick up every protest sign to be in with those who express their frustration more than their ideas, nor will he easily join those asking for more protection, more police, more discipline and more order . . . More than anything else he will look into the reality of the concrete situation in which he finds himself, for signs of hope and promise.

—from Henry Nouwen: "Generation Without Fathers"
COMMONWEAL, June 12, 1970

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translated into modern ethical currency and can contribute meaning to the sinuous complexities of contemporary social struggle.

Further, this book appears in a day when non-violence has been widely deemed a helpless dream and when impatient idealism is mightily tempted by simplistic hopes of violent salvation. A strong, reflective, and practical treatment of non-violence in a Christian perspective would meet a great need today. That need, which could be met by someone of Bernard Häring's depth and sensitivity, survives the book under review.

It is probably the publishers who are to be faulted here. Yes, we all know that there is a bear market in religious books nowadays. So Farrar, Straus, and Giroux gathered up a few scattered pieces of an influential theologian, stretched them into little-book size, grabbed a topical title, priced it at $5.95, and hoped that it might hit 15,000 sales. Would it not be better for all involved if publishers returned to an old insight of the market place? Put out good products at reasonable prices and they sell.

REVIEWERS

ROBERT EMMET LONG *is an assistant professor of English at Queens College in New York.*

JEFFREY MEYERS *teaches in the English Department at Tufts University in Massachusetts.*

LINDA KUEHL, *a free-lance writer and critic, has an interview with Eudora Welty appearing in* The Paris Review.

EDWARD R. F. SHEEHAN, *a native Bostonian, resides in Paris. His new novel about church and state in Massachusetts will be published this fall by* World.

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LEONARD KRIEGEL *is a professor of English at City College of New York.*

MARTIN E. MARTY, *an associate editor of* The Christian Century, *is the author of* The Place of Bonhoeffer.

JOHN SIMON, *drama critic for* The New Leader *and* New York Magazine, *is the author of* Private Screenings *(Macmillan).*

WILFRID SHEED'S *most recent book was the highly-praised novel* Max Jamison *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux).*

GARRY WILLS, *the author of* Nixon Agonistes *(Houghton, Mifflin), teaches Classics at John Hopkins University.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 83)

all were afterwards brought to safety. When the battle began, the garrison, consisting of Palestinian Arabs and Iraqi regulars used the ruse of hanging white flags from the houses nearest the village entrance. When the Irgun advanced, they were met by a hail of fire. One of the first to be hit was the commander. A fierce house-to-house fighting followed. When all was over, it was indeed discovered that the bodies of women and children were found next to those of the fighting men. It was an Arab, a prominent inhabitant of Deir Yassin, Yunes Ahmed Assad, who wrote in the Jordanian daily *"Al Urdun"* on April 9, 1955: "The Jews never intended to hurt the population of the village, but were forced to do so after they met enemy fire from the population which killed the Irgun commander." This is an interesting document. Its only inaccuracy is that the Irgun commander survived. But Assad, evidently an eye witness, saw him fall.

(ABBOT) LEO A. RUDLOFF, O.S.B.
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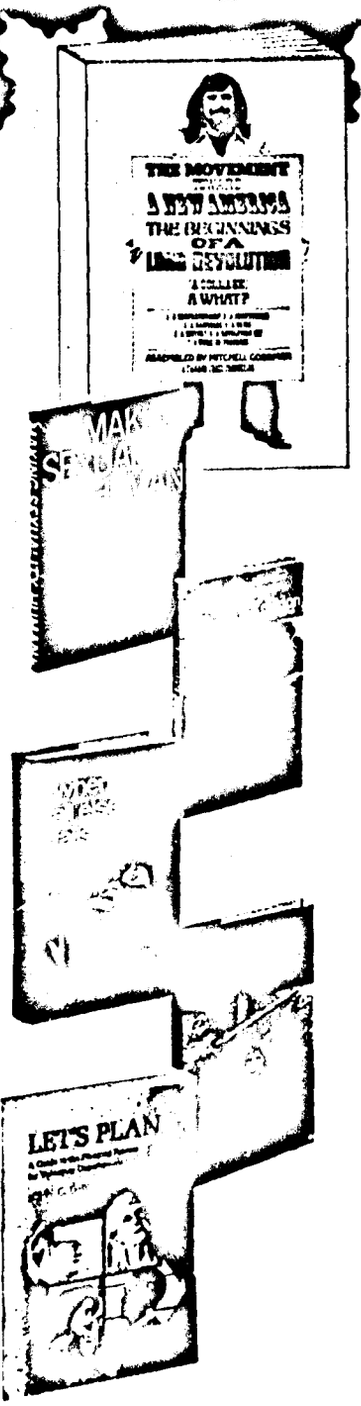

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